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H I G H S C H O O L W R E S T L I N G

F O R E C A S T

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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. This report was written during a six-day period in mid-January ending January 22 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 is a recruiting year in Ohio that may not be as strong as originally forecasted. While wrestlers like Robbins, Petche and Scavuzzo have developed into blue chip prospects, a number of last year's juniors that appeared to be potential stars have not yet reached that level. Part of this has been the result of an unprecedented number of injuries that have kept important wrestlers out of action, but in other cases, the anticipated normal level of improvement has not yet occurred. What I believe will happen is that the State Tournament process (sectionals, districts, and state) will take on added importance in the evaluation of senior wrestlers. The cold December which eliminated or reduced many competitions may have set back the testing process through which we recognize superior talent. This year, in Cincinnati, we'll be better able to judge the quality of this year's class.

One of the exciting prospects in 1990 is close team competitions in all three school classifications. In Division I this is likely to be strictly a two team contest that could potentially be decided only after the last heavyweight bout is completed early Saturday evening. In both Division II and III, there should be furious team struggles for the top spot with a half dozen schools having the potential to be champions. Teams from all around the state have the "horsepower" to take the crown in these two classifications.

One of the pleasures of being a high school wrestling fan is visiting or revisiting tournaments all over the State of Ohio. While the quality of wrestling has dramatically improved in the last 15 to 20 years, so, too, has the quality of high school wrestling tournaments. Nowadays, we take for granted the professionalism and enthusiasm virtually every tournament in Ohio exhibits, and often fail to notice the many improvements that are continuously being made. Giant tournaments with 30 or more teams like the OVAC and MIT run as smoothly today as quadrangulars were handled in the past. Just as importantly, these tournament directors keep developing new and innovative ways not only to handle routine chores like weigh-ins or team scoring, but to create enhancements that significantly enhance the aesthetics of the tournament process. They all deserve to be commended.

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. About the only issue outstanding is the expansion of the wrestle-back system during the state tournament progression to include those who have lost to losing semi-finalists. Starting this year, all sectional and district tournaments now utilize this far fairer system to select qualifiers. In order to ascertain its value, I examined the Northeastern District bracket sheets at the end of the season. They showed that two state champions, Martinez and Gregory, and two runners-up, Lowery and Julian, would not have even qualified for Columbus had we used the old methodology. This leaves only the state tournament itself as a last bastion for the archaic and unfair current system. The OHSAA moved rapidly and effectively in discovering a new and appropriate location when the normal facility was unexpectedly unavailable. They showed the ability to improvise and change direction when the occasion required it. Surely, working together, we can find a way to utilize the improved consolation system at the state level as well.

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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DIVISION I

I anticipate that the upcoming decade of the 1990s will begin to redress the imbalance in Division I competition that we have seen during the past ten years. During that time frame, the Northeast District which this year provides 37.5% of the qualifiers, won 111 of the 130 (84.6%) individual titles. While Division II and Division III show a reasonable balance of winners from around Ohio, this pattern remains unbroken with regard to the big schools. My guess is that ten years from today we will see a substantially different series of results that will, at a minimum, double the other district winners.

This year the powerful Mentor District was reduced from four qualifiers per weight class to three. Originally my feeling was that it would have little effect on state placement results. However, a check of last year's results show that Mentor's fourth place qualifier captured state placement more often than district champs from other areas. The table below presents this data.

1989 Results

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number Placing</u>
Mentor Champ	13	10
Mentor 2nd	13	8
Mentor 3rd	13	7
Mentor 4th	13	7
Perry Champ	13	6
Upper Arlington Champ	13	6
Dayton Champ	13	6

Finally, the new qualification format with five districts flowing into the State Tournament make an equitable state pairings formula an imperative. With five champions -- one quarter-bracket must contain two district champions so it is vital that this placement of champions be completely random. No one district should gain a pairings advantage because of an incomplete mix of alternatives.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RAY HEGARTY (HOLY NAME)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Russell (St. Edward) | 12. Derr (Fitch) |
| 3. Allen (Worthington) | 13. Whitaker (Warren Western Reserve) |
| 4. Richner (Painesville Riverside) | 14. Jeter (Sandusky) |
| 5. Grove (West Chester Lakota) | 15. Fracchione (Lorain Southview) |
| 6. Ford (Walsh Jesuit) | 16. Meyer (Perrysburg) |
| 7. Burkle (Upper Arlington) | 17. Ruckman (Holland Springfield) |
| 8. North (Princeton) | 18. Griffith (Dublin) |
| 9. Clatterbuck (Northland) | 19. Penn (Franklin Hts.) |
| 10. Lanese (Brush) | 20. Ratcliff (Marion Harding) |
| 11. Barden (Fairfield) | 21. Conyers (Trotwood Madison) |

Generally, this lightest of weight classes provides sophomores and freshmen with their best chance for a state title. This has not proven true recently, however, as only junior and seniors have made the finals here since the restructuring of the weight classes. This is likely to hold true once again in 1990 as four of the top five contenders are older wrestlers, but two brilliant freshman candidates have the potential to reverse this pattern. What is more likely to change, though, is the Perry District's two year reign at the top of this class.

The Mentor District is very strong at this weight and the lack of a fourth qualifying spot will further heighten the already tough competition. Three of the top four boys exit from this district and five of the top fifteen will compete here. My choice is the solid junior Ray Hegarty, 5th at this weight last year. He has campaigned all season at 112# losing, only once, and capturing the strong Solon Invitational and will be a very strong performer at this lower weight. Very good on his feet, his best attribute is his high-pressure rides that can dominate a bout. Last year I felt that he didn't wrestle with the confidence his skills allowed, but his strong performance last year should erase that problem. His toughest competition should be another West Side Cleveland wrestler, Herb Russell, just recently recovered from a season-long hand injury. Behind Gustovich (3rd at Columbus) last year, Russell, nonetheless, wrestled brilliantly with the second team, and substituted for the injured Gustovich by winning the prestigious Ohio Catholic (OCC) Championship in dominating style. Only just back, he repeated that triumph and his late start should make him fresher than the competition. His only defect is a weakness on the bottom and Hegarty has the style to take advantage of that shortcoming. Should he win the title, he would overcome a jinx that has followed St. Ed's for more than a decade. Despite 32 state champs they have never won below 112#. Richner, now a senior, has had four distinguished years at this weight including the Mentor District title last year where he beat state placers Gustovich and Rocco back-to-back. At Columbus he faltered in the quarter-finals and the archaic consolation rules gave him no second chance. Earlier, he was my strong choice here, but both Hegarty and Russell may be a bit better on their feet. However, he cannot be described as anything but a strong candidate for the top spot. Since all three boys exit from different sectionals, the pairings should be good. Both Lanese and Fracchione would qualify from any other district, but they are likely to be shut out here. The clever Gilmore (St. Joseph) is also excellent, but appears to

small to qualify.

Allen is an exceptional freshman (and son of former coach Pete Allen) who could break the stranglehold at the top by the Mentor District competitors. His performance at the Medina Invitational (MIT) was superb, losing only in the last seconds to Division III choice Tim Dernlan. An excellent pinner with solid takedown skills, he will be a real chore for even the most experienced 103#. Burkle has been at 112# all year with solid success and I expect him at 103# when Stout moves down. He and state qualifier Clatterbuck are the favorites for the last two qualifying spots in what is a crowded field. Last year the Central District and Northwest District were combined with five qualifiers. Had this remained the case, the Columbus area dominance at this weight might have captured all of the spots. As it is Penn, Griffith, and another fine freshman, Ratcliff, need a major upset to compete the final week of the season. Their best hope might be that Burkle will move up to 119# instead of down to 103# which would open up the battle for the last qualifying spot.

Ford is the other marvelous freshman at this weight, but may be a step behind the top four. Winner of the North Canton and Coventry titles, he lost convincingly 4-0 to Russell in the OCC finals. At the MIT he lost a tough overtime match to Dernlan when he squandered a lead and then lost on conditioning. Derr, a canny senior, lost all of last season to injury, but has come back strong this year. Ford, however, handled him easily at North Canton. The rest of the field at Perry is way behind these top two. In addition to Whitaker, both Wheeler (Massillon) and Hershman (Akron Springfield) could get the third qualifying spot.

Like Hegarty and Burkle, Grove has wrestled at 112# this year, but will compete at this weight come tourney time. He was among the top contenders at Dayton last year, but a poor draw cost him a possible qualifying spot. This year it's unlikely that he will be sidetracked at Dayton, and should be in line for a low place. State qualifier North and newcomer Barden also have placement potential and should easily qualify out of this four man district. There is a major drop-off in quality after this trio with Conyers a nominal fourth choice. Any of a half dozen wrestlers could capture that last spot.

The Rogers District is by far the weakest of the Division I quintet. Most competitors there are journeyman performers, at best, with their highest ambitions being first round fodder at States. An exception might be Jeter who has performed well all year. After him, it's very wide open with Meyers and Ruckman just best guesses for the last two spots.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MATT STOUT (UPPER ARLINGTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Gustovich (St. Edward) | 13. Kirkbride (Glen Oak) |
| 3. T. Miller (Defiance) | 14. Dolder (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 4. Bray (Franklin) | 15. C. J. Miller (Ashland) |
| 5. Dodson (Westerville North) | 16. Ramirez (Westerville South) |
| 6. Armstrong (Fairborn) | 17. Scherer (Fairmount) |
| 7. White (Xenia) | 18. Kern (Maumee) |
| 8. Robinson (Lorain Southview) | 19. McFarland (Massillon Perry) |
| 9. Darden (Sandusky) | 20. Graham (Shaw) |
| 10. Gerome (St. Joseph) | 21. Yeager (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. Hurford (Alliance) | 22. Benjamin (Dublin) |
| 12. Marut (Painesville Riverside) | 23. Philipps (North Olmsted) |

At least on the surface this is one of the most difficult weight classes to forecast with no one or two wrestlers appearing to dominate the remaining competition. In fact, there are five contenders each brandishing impressive credentials. Over the past few weeks I've actually had four different names at the top of the endless lists I construct, but in the end I've favored Stout by the narrowest of margins.

Stout is using the same strategy as last year that paid-off in a runner-up finish at 103#. He began at 119# and has competed at that higher weight all year losing three times -- including twice at Brunswick. Letting his weight drift down to 112# he should be reasonably fresh for another run at a state title. He needs to be ready a week earlier this year because he'll exit from a dynamite district. It includes state qualifiers Dodson, Dolder, Benjamin, and Ireton (Logan), along with solid performers like Ramirez and Rizer (Marion Harding). I would not be surprised to see at least several of these contenders bail out to the far easier (at least at their district) 119# class. Dodson, coming off a lengthy injury, is just returning to form but recently won the St. Xavier Invitation with relative ease. Both Dolder and Benjamin qualified at 112# last year (in contrast to Stout and Dodson who were at 103#), but were outscored 47-12 in their three combined state bouts. That won't happen again -- if they can get there. Ramirez was an upset district loser last year, but barely lost to Dolder in the sectional finals. State qualifier Ireton looks overmatched here.

Certainly, the choice of Stout cannot be easily justified by an examination of the numbers. During the decade of the 1980s, only two Central District wrestlers captured Division I titles -- Rex Holman and Robby Johnson -- although several others, including Stout himself, came close. Perhaps he'll begin the '90s on a more positive note for an area that has done so well in Division II and III.

Last year Stout's biggest obstacle on his way to the state finals was the tenacious Gustovich who he defeated 10-7 in overtime in a very tight match. This year Gustovich again looms between Stout and that state crown. Already this year he crushed Division III state champ Mattin in the North Canton finals and won the mammoth, multi-state Minnesota Holiday Tourney. But there have been downsides, too. Injury and weight problems have put him up at 119# where he has lost four

times and proven to everyone that he cannot compete at the very top level at that weight. And, yet, clearly the weight cut is burdensome and may divide his concentration -- which will be fatal with the high quality field assembled here. Robinson has now twice defeated a likely three-time West Virginia state champ, but has yet to reach States during his career. Last year two incredibly tough defeats eliminated him at Mentor after a sparkling first round victory. The talent is there, but that promise has yet to be fulfilled. Last year Gerome failed to get out of his sectional, but he has been solid all this year. He could well play a major role in the intense team struggle between St. Edward and St. Joseph. While Gustovich figures to capture a qualifying spot, Robinson and Gerome are but nominal favorites. Both Marut and Ranallo (Mayfield) have dropped in recent days and should perform well at this weight. Graham can be hot and cold, but his big win over Hegarty at Brunswick indicate the depths of his talent. Beyond this group there are another half dozen competitors who will make this one of the sternest competitions at Mentor. In particular, watch for Philipps who has improved mightily and who lost 13-12 to Gustovich in last year's sectional.

Both Stout and Gustovich are solid, conservative performers who take few chances. Todd Miller, on the other hand, is a whirlwind with a penchant for pinning and a thirst for back points. Last year, at 112#, he was 4th at Columbus blowing away three competitors and losing a breathtaking 13-12 battle to two-time state finalist Chris Russo. Only Leemaster handled him easily. This year he remains unchallenged, and likely to remain so until late in District competition. State qualifier Darden will also be a force from this District with a good state performance last year (although not placing) and a Brecksville title this year -- which included an overtime win over Division II runner-up Scott Bowers. The third spot should be "up for grabs" with C. J. Miller, state qualifier Kern, and Carr the most likely candidates. Hennessey (Toledo St. Francis) was 4th at the OCC and Srihanovuong (Lima Shawnee), a winner over Dolder are other possibilities.

The fourth potent force at this weight is likely to be state qualifier Bray who defeated Dodson at Columbus and battled Gustovich late into the third period. He has strong placement potential. State qualifiers Armstrong and White (who was 4th last year) have not looked as sharp as Bray and have slipped slightly behind him. All three of these competitors are very good. State qualifier Scherer and Yeager are my choices to battle it out for the fourth spot as they are far ahead of a bevy of other possible contenders. Scherer, a qualifier two years ago, has not shown the progress expected after his sophomore performance. This will be his last opportunity.

You couldn't ask for two more dissimilar types when matching up the top two contenders at Perry. State qualifier Hurford is short, stocky, very physical, and has campaigned at 119# all year. He lost a heartbreaking overtime battle in the state quarter-finals last year. I may have ranked him too low despite the blandishments of his coach. Kirkbride is probably the tallest 112# in the state, but his victory at the MIT cements his already solid credentials. His only loss was to Hegarty. After that it's wide-open with McFarland and state qualifier Kiouis having the best opportunity for Columbus. Ferrar (Kenmore) and Sackett (Akron North) could also qualify.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE MIHALIC (ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Leemaster (Walsh Jesuit) | 12. Hicks (Toledo St. John) |
| 3. Marchette (North Canton) | 13. Williams (Marion-Franklin) |
| 4. Chandler (St. Edward) | 14. Weaver (Anthony Wayne) |
| 5. Fowler (Vandalia Butler) | 15. Ramos (Lorain Southview) |
| 6. Duncan (Findlay) | 16. Harrison (Fairfield) |
| 7. Hickin (Kent Roosevelt) | 17. Ashton (Perrysburg) |
| 8. K. Richner (Painesville Riverside) | 18. Neidich (Elder) |
| 9. Kingsbury (Grove City) | 19. Lawless (Xenia) |
| 10. Pluhar (Maple Hts.) | 20. Daugherty (Ravenna) |
| 11. Dobosh (West Chester Lakota) | 21. Smith (Gahanna Lincoln) |

What a wonderful competition this should be with some of the best and most physical wrestlers in the state displaying their enormous skills. They should generate tremendous fan interest and this could be remembered as one of the classic confrontations in state tournament history. Let's introduce the five principals.

Mike Mihalic, one of the two seniors in this group, qualified at 125# last year and reached the semi-finals before losing to destiny's child (at least for that weekend) state champion Bill Lally. Included were a second period fall over Marchette and an impressive win over the rugged Kimble. This year he was undefeated at 130# before dropping to 119# and sweeping to the OCC title.

The brilliant Leemaster was 44-2 last year, finishing a strong 3rd at Columbus in the 112# class. He shut out his last two opponents 9-0 and 11-0 there, and gave the dominating Laflin his best bout. This year he was OW at the huge MIT and totally undefeated until stumbling 7-6 to the excellent Division II wrestler Humphrey at the OCC, and missing a confrontation with Mihalic. A tremendous leg wrestler, he can be enormously punishing, but can score from every position. His only flaw has been not to attack, but to gain defensive takedowns after an opponent's initial shot. Such takedowns are an important part of any good wrestler's arsenal, but when they begin to substitute for aggressive actions they inevitably have the effect of reducing his long-term growth and effectiveness. Only a junior, he was a huge favorite until the other three dropped to this weight.

Marchette is a stocky dynamo who qualified for Columbus at 125# last year, and has wrestled there most of this year. He, too, won the MIT and his "rock-em, sock-em" physical style is a real crowd pleaser. A thrower in the best sense of the word he wrestles a lot of very high scoring bouts. He'll give up some points looking for his move, but when he finds it he scores points in bunches.

Chandler, only a sophomore, has not yet reached 119# and may, in fact, stay at 125#. However, if he is as effective at 119#, it greatly strengthens the team chances for St. Edward's. In many ways he is the most impressive of the quintet. A tremendously aggressive wrestler, he neither gives nor expects any quarter, and his matches are tremendously physical. His 125# bout with state champ Dernlan

was a classic that resulted in a narrow 8-7 loss, but was so devastating that Dernlan had to forfeit the final. He wrestles like a collegian right now, and his future prospects are unlimited. In the 1980s all of the great St. Ed's wrestlers were matched against the standard of the incomparable Jimmy Heffernan. In the 1990s, that standard may well be Roger Chandler.

Jamie Fowler is another high scoring competitor who may be hampered only because he does not meet the type of competition the other four must face. A semi-finalist at Columbus last year he recorded a pair of technical falls before being derailed by Russo and finishing 5th. This year he has so far been unchallenged, and will likely remain so until he reaches state competition.

At Mentor, Mihalic and Chandler will dominate with third spot likely to be the object of a fierce battle between four sophomores -- state qualifier Kevin Richner, Pluhar, Ramos, and Nathanson. It will be a spirited competition with the draw possibly playing a role in its outcome.

The Perry District has a third candidate for state placement in Hickin, and he stands well above the rest of the field in vying for that third spot behind Marchette and Leemaster. At this time, only Daugherty would seem another viable candidate.

As I mentioned, Fowler stands unchallenged at Dayton, although Dobosh has made great strides. With an excellent state draw he could grab a very low place. Harrison and Neidich are slight favorites for the last two spots, but the similarly named Lawless and Lawhorn (West Carrollton) are just slightly behind. None from this group will pose much threat at the state level.

Duncan leads the Rogers contingent and could possibly challenge those ranked above him. Placing 6th as a sophomore, this two-time state qualifier would be in the hunt for a high place at most weight classes. Here, he may be in over his head. Nonetheless, he has undeniable talent as witness his two OW awards this year. Hicks, 4th in Division III last year, will find this weight class a far different story while Weaver and Ashton will just hope to qualify.

The Hilliard District seems way overmatched here, although some of the excellent 112's may move up to escape the district crush there. Williams and Kingsbury lead the way while Smith and Olinger (New Philadelphia) have a chance. It's likely that without a transfusion of several 112's, one or two unknowns will qualify here.

This is one to savor and enjoy.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE ST. JOHN (ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. McCollins (Massillon Perry) | 13. Camp (Troy) |
| 3. Murray (Fairfield) | 14. Holland (Defiance) |
| 4. Knaze (St. Edward) | 15. Reece (Toledo St. John) |
| 5. K. LaCure (North Canton Hoover) | 16. Comstock (Beavercreek) |
| 6. Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) | 17. Emerich (Columbus South) |
| 7. M. Doll (Dayton Wayne) | 18. Giovonozzo (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 8. Biros (Stow) | 19. Newbury (Milford) |
| 9. Grant (Westerville North) | 20. Grammes (Strongsville) |
| 10. Wilcox (Gahanna Lincoln) | 21. Jackson (Patterson) |
| 11. Dickerson (Sandusky) | 22. Seeman (Holland Springfield) |
| 12. Marotta (Valley Forge) | 23. Gorenflo (Marion Harding) |

It was just five years ago that plucky senior, Dan St. John, performing at peak intensity wrestled the heavily favored Monty Dagley to a complete standstill in the championship bout -- only to lose the title on two of the most ill-judged calls I've had the misfortune to witness in state finals competition. It was one of the most devastating losses in John Storey's long coaching career. However, the story does have a happy ending -- more or less -- as NCAA champ Dan St. John looks toward his second national title in March while younger brother Steve is already one of the nation's best high school wrestlers in his junior year.

Last year only three-time state champ Shawn Nelson could defeat St. John and at the end the margin was steadily shrinking. This year St. John is, perhaps, the strongest favorite in Division I. Not particularly flashy, St. John is just so solid that the risk of error appears to approach zero. The Mentor District is uncharacteristically weak here with St. John and Knaze (or Chandler) well ahead of the rest of the field. Knaze seems finally resigned to wrestling kids somewhere near his own size rather than at 135# where he looked lost among the "redwoods". He is terrific on his feet and will be St. John's only threat here. Last year he missed state qualification by a single point. Marotta and Grammes may have marginally better chances than a squadron of others for the last berth.

At Perry, the splendid Marchette has moved to 119#, but there are still four "heavy hitters" remaining. Two-time state qualifier McCollins has not been lucky at St. John's Arena, losing to Laflin and Leemaster in consecutive bouts and not being "carried" either year. He may, at least, be anxious to move to the Cincinnati Gardens. Two-time state qualifier Whitmer placed as a freshman, but has not won a state bout since then. Just back from a long rehabilitation, he was dominated by LaCure in his first dual at 125#. LaCure has a strange style that confuses and confounds, but which has proved highly successful. Last year it took him one bout from state and may do even better this year. He has lost to McCollins and Leemaster, but defeated Whitmer, Dodson, and Gustovich. Biros, another state qualifier, may be pondering his options at 130#, but he certainly is not without hope here. He won both the Hudson and Brunswick tourneys. People like Giovonozzo, state qualifier Retherford (Ravenna) and Stahl (Medina) have little hope here.

A disputed stalling call with seconds left put Murray, the best from the Dayton District, into overtime against eventual champ Lally in the quarter-finals and the subsequent loss prevented Murray from a possible title shot. Nonetheless, he wrestled wonderfully well including a pulsating 14-13 OT win over Mihalic. He does not lose easily to anyone. Both Doll and Camp also have placement potential, while Comstock, Newbury, and Jackson illustrate the terrific depth at this district. The competition will be fierce from the first round here -- well preparing the survivors for more of the same at the state level.

At Hilliard the quality of competition is much lower. State qualifier Grant is not ready for the top echelon of performers. Chandler twice destroyed him and he lost early at North Canton. Wilcox has performed well placing 3rd or better in every meet and winning titles twice. Emerich lost late in the districts to Grant and didn't qualify, but should have the inside track for the third spot. He nipped Wilcox by two points at the Eastmoor. Gorenflo, the Marion Harding champ, has the best chance at an upset.

The Rogers District is even weaker. I keep thinking I must be missing some standouts, but so far those listed are the top possibilities for state action. None won a district bout last year. The one darkhorse candidate might be Holland who has been on the verge of excellence for some time.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHRIS RANALLO (MAYFIELD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Kimble (Fairborn) | 12. Capel (Mentor) |
| 3. Van Cucha (Strongsville) | 13. C. Jackson (Toledo Scott) |
| 4. Fetter (Pickerington) | 14. Clagg (Grove City) |
| 5. Lehman (St. Edward) | 15. Lazarra (Sandusky) |
| 6. Gerken (Toledo Central Catholic) | 16. Bulugaris (Beavercreek) |
| 7. Gron (St. Joseph) | 17. Dailey (Ravenna) |
| 8. Sabo (Walsh Jesuit) | 18. Brookins (Princeton) |
| 9. C. Miller (Clay) | 19. Downward (Westerville North) |
| 10. Seesholtz (Hilliard) | 20. Fisher (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. B. LaCure (North Canton Hoover) | 21. Henry (Eastmoor) |

While this weight class presents a solid cast of performers, it lacks a superstar elite that have already proven themselves in past state performances. What it should feature is a series of very fiercely contested bouts, many of which are likely to be low-scoring. In such a situation, external factors like the vagaries of the draw, the officiating, and plain, old-fashioned luck can play a major role.

My choice is the very solid state qualifier Chris Ranallo who has wrestled a difficult schedule flawlessly this year. Already winner of both the Solon and Kenston championships (both times defeating Division II state champ Brian Haring along with state runner-up John McCumber), Ranallo had bad luck in Columbus last year. A strong 3rd at the Mentor District including a win over Mihalic could not prevent a very difficult first round draw and a 3-1 elimination. He was the only

Mentor qualifier at his weight not to place. He is very stubborn on the mat and difficult to beat. State qualifier Van Cucha is not that far behind losing this year only to Haring. Lehman and Gron could play big roles in the team race by placing at this weight and both are capable of such an accomplishment. Lehman won the huge Minnesota Holiday Tourney, but his finals performances at North Canton and the OCC were much too passive. He must be more aggressive on his feet to justify this ranking. Gron lost 6-5 to Knaze at the OCC and may well see him again if St. Ed's leaves Chandler at 125#. Capel, the Brecksville champ, will battle Gron and Lehman for that last qualifying spot.

The biggest threat to the Mentor boys is the rapidly improving Kimble. He towers over the remainder of his district where I have had trouble finding four wrestlers to rate. Last year Kimble reached the state quarter-finals before losing to Mihalic. This year Ranallo and, possibly, Van Cucha are the only people able to compete at his level. It is possible that like last year with Aienza and Grant this could turn into a two-man contest. If so, Kimble will be bucking the odds -- the Mentor District has won this title (or the equivalent at 132#) every year since 1984.

Sabo, who has still to reach 130#, heads a very weak Perry District. A fine pinner and aggressive takedown performer, Sabo has won at North Canton, finished 2nd at Coventry and the MIT, and 3rd at the OCC -- all at 135#. One of those losses was to Gron. LaCure is an exceptional freshman who may one day become another North Canton superstar. His North Canton title showed glimpses of what is likely to be, while the MIT exposed his inexperience. However, there is no disguising his athletic skills. Dailey is one of countless solid wrestlers at Ravenna with an opportunity for state advancement. Miller (Canton McKinley), Chiudoni (Massillon Perry), and Tibolla (Fitch) are other possibilities.

There is a solid Hilliard contingent lead by the suddenly fearsome Fetter. Only third in his sectional last year, he dropped two tough district bouts 11-5 in OT to state qualifier Andy and a 15-10 heartbreaker in the consolations. Suddenly this year he has crushed his finalist opponent in two major tourneys this year. Watch for him. Seesholtz engaged in some weird bouts at the MIT including a 26-21 OT bout where he was disqualified for passivity while ahead. He ended up 5th. Clagg, at 140# all year, just dropped and should be a major factor at this district. Last year he won two district bouts including one over Fetter. Downward and Henry are other possibilities with Robinson (Worthington) a dark horse.

Despite the presence of four state qualifiers at Rogers, I foresee some difficult times for the three eventual qualifiers once they reach Cincinnati. Gerken, Lazzara, and Miller were all Division I qualifiers, but dropped all five bouts they contested. Tammerine in Division II split his two contests, but is moving up a division. Somehow, none seem to have the firepower that seems evident in other areas. A possible exception is Gerken who, however, has been plagued by injuries. The extremely powerful Jackson cannot be overlooked here. He has the ability to qualify over two or three more experienced boys, and at States he would be able to "fire out" with nothing to lose.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD HAYDEN (KENT ROOSEVELT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. C. Doll (Elder) | 13. Darby (Moeller) |
| 3. Reed (Maple Hts.) | 14. Driscoll (Nordia) |
| 4. Ramsey (Strongsville) | 15. McChrystal (St. Ignatius) |
| 5. Wilson (Stow) | 16. Delmonaco (North Canton) |
| 6. Andy (Ashland) | 17. Marvich (Marion Harding) |
| 7. Strunk (West Chester Lakota) | 18. Herbert (Uniontown Lake) |
| 8. Mack (Ravenna) | 19. Sullivan (St. Joseph) |
| 9. Gray (Wilmington) | 20. Sprague (Carrollton) |
| 10. Harrell (Marion Franklin) | 21. Sanchez (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 11. Lawless (Xenia) | 22. Salinas (Defiance) |
| 12. Muir (Whitmer) | 23. Bertone (Painesville Riverside) |

Until today, this was undoubtedly one of the weakest weight classes in Division I, and that's unusual because it's right at the peak of the normal distribution of weight for high school boys. However, as of today, four previous state qualifiers have grown to six as Bob Andy and Kevin Reed will apparently wrestle here. I had labeled this an opportunity weight class in my original text, suggesting that it deserved close study by coaches trying to position their people in the most favorable possible way. Apparently, coaches are taking my advice before they even had a chance to see it. It also means that a "hot" weekend could mean a state title for any of a dozen or so wrestlers shown above.

Todd Hayden has to be listed as the marginal favorite based on a district title and state qualification last year, and an unblemished record at 145# this season, which includes Hudson and Kenston titles. His slow, methodical style should be enhanced as he will now wrestle boys more his own size. The problem is that he wrestles too many close bouts reducing his margin for error. His two title wins this year were 3-1 and 3-2 and his district title came on back-to-back shut-outs 1-0 and 2-0. Should he fall behind he may have trouble scoring enough to get back into the bout. Still, his extensive experience and solid skills make him the competitor to beat here.

Some of his strongest competition will also be at Perry. Wilson, a state qualifier as a freshman last year, also wrestles many low-scoring battles -- and has had equal success winning at both Hudson and Brunswick. The last of a large family of wrestlers, he has sound fundamentals and vast experience. Hayden defeated him for the district title last year. Mack is a far different competitor featuring superior strength and more scoring punch. Last year he lost to future state champ Martinez in the first round and then was eliminated from consolation consideration when Martinez was upset in the next round. He has upset potential. Delmonaco and Herbert are other possibilities with the former having an "up and down" year. Mackall (Fitch) is also a contender.

The best district overall is probably the Southwest where a quintet of five performers will vie for four spots. Like some other top contenders, Doll, 6th last year, has wrestled a lot of low scoring bouts this year including a 2-1 triumph at the OCC and a 1-0 win for 3rd at the Cincinnati Holiday. This trend

suggests that this weight class may not have the fans at the edge of their seats as it is played out. Doll's only loss was to Strunk who has been beaten by Darby and Lawless, who lost to Doll -- well you get the picture. The outsider is Gray who generally competes away from the others, but qualified for Columbus the past two years. Unfortunately, one of this group -- all of whom are rated in my top ten -- will be eliminated.

Reed and Ramsey will head a rather mediocre Mentor contingent. Reed was a state qualifier and 6th place finisher at this weight last year. He beat Ramsey 5-0 during that process. He has lost only to Division II, Connelly, at Brecksville and brings a world of experience to the mat. He is heavily tutored by the Milkoviches for peak performance at tournament time, and his startlingly quick cradle can catch anyone. He pinned state favorite Jason Hackett with it last year. Ramsey, winner of the Kenston over Mack, wrestled well early last season, but did not look good in district competition and was eliminated early. He must resist that trend this year. Driscoll has been injured much of the year, but recently returned with a dual win over McChrystal. Sullivan could help the St. Joe's cause but Ramsey hammered him in the districts last year and he was not a factor at the OCC. Bertone is another possibility as are Kause (Mayfield), Hess (Mentor) and Mills (Lorain Southview). It would not surprise me to see St. Edward's manipulate their line-up to get one of their fine middleweights positioned here.

The Central and Northwest Districts are both depleted at this weight class and look to be basically bracket-fillers at this class. The big exception is two-time state qualifier Bob Andy, now that he has moved in this direction. He has lost this year only to Division III choice, Ohl. Last year he was involved in a controversial first round disqualification where he was the recipient of a victory late in a bout he was losing 7-0. He then lost a tough bout in the quarter-finals 6-3. Again we may see late movement both up from 130# and down from 140#, as this basic weakness becomes more widely recognized.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL TAYLOR (TOLEDO ROGERS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Marcelli (Massillon Perry) | 12. Taylor (Xenia) |
| 3. Vilaboy (St. Xavier) | 13. Kent (Westerville South) |
| 4. Henry (Meadowdale) | 14. Comerford (Holy Name) |
| 5. Lanese (Brush) | 15. Fickes (Centerville) |
| 6. Gergely (Amherst Steele) | 16. Indorf (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 7. Franklin (Walsh Jesuit) | 17. Turns (Uniontown Lake) |
| 8. Fritz (Westerville North) | 18. Whitmore (Ravenna) |
| 9. Lutz (Whitmer) | 19. Robinson (Groveport) |
| 10. Timberlake (Fairfield) | 20. Beres (St. Edward) |
| 11. Smith (Dayton Wayne) | 21. Merrill (Elyria) |

In contrast to the previous weight class, 140# promises to be a spirited tournament featuring a wide variety of styles and backgrounds. There are a lot

over Eric Laflin and Vilaboy last year. He has lost several times and escaped with some narrow wins as well. He must be better by tourney time. State qualifiers Timberlake and Smith again return and will play a major role here. Smith has yet to win a tourney title, so far, and like Taylor needs to move into a higher gear. Timberlake was a surprise qualifier last year and has apparently retained that momentum. The promising Fickes will search for an opening while Pangallo (Oak Harbor), who upset Taylor, and Long (West Carrollton) seem to have little chance.

At Hilliard the enigmatic Fritz will strive for a repeat visit to state tournament action. So far this year he has only shown flashes of his real potential while finishing 6th at the MIT and 2nd at North Canton. His huge win at the St. X Invitational may be a precursor of better things. Last year Taylor nipped him 10-9 in the district quarter-finals. I've liked Kent for several years now, but he has not been able to breach district obstacles. This year he has won the Tiffin against fierce rival Robinson. Challenging this trio will be another threesome with nearly comparable skills -- Geese (Dublin), Streets (Worthington), and Tiberi (Gahanna Lincoln). Only Fritz in this area would seem to have placement potential.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM ANDRASSY (NORDONIA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Hepp (St. Edward) | 13. Byers (Groveport) |
| 3. Tzagournis (Upper Arlington) | 14. Haynes (Warren Western Reserve) |
| 4. Ary (Xenia) | 15. Lauby (Westerville North) |
| 5. Plouse (Akron North) | 16. Geiser (Fairborn) |
| 6. Dill (Delaware Hayes) | 17. Ovall (Holland Springfield) |
| 7. Lopez (Fremont Ross) | 18. Flannery (Holy Name) |
| 8. Turner (North Canton) | 19. Lamb (Worthington) |
| 9. Jackson (Cleveland Hts.) | 20. Nicholson (Buchtel) |
| 10. Rapin (Centerville) | 21. Frederick (Patterson) |
| 11. McDaniel (West Chester Lakota) | 22. Terrill (Firestone) |
| 12. Rastetter (Mansfield Madison) | 23. Lucy (Galion) |

This appears to be a three way confrontation between two very experienced seniors and a first year varsity wrestler entering his junior year. My favorite is Jim Andrassy, but only by the narrowest of margins. He seems to have brought his enormous talent under control, and looks ready to win the state title that seemed so close when he finished 5th as a freshman. Last year he had a clear road to the finals with both Martinez and Hackett away from him, but he stumbled over Oyer and finished 4th. This year his most impressive win was over defending state champ Greg Genovese which included three smartly executed takedowns. The other senior is state qualifier John Tzagournis who has been awesome since dropping to 145#. He majored Solon champ Flannery 18-6 and crushed his competition at Beaver creek. He can score a lot, but he will have to reach for yet a higher level if he is to defeat Andrassy. The major obstacle to both these competitors is hugely talented Hepp, who was runner-up in the Worlds last summer in the Under 16 competition. He dominated the OCC crushing Vilaboy 12-2 in the

finals, and, probably making 140# look much more attractive. At the MIT he dominated Genovese running up an early 8-1 lead, but then mysteriously running out of steam and losing 18-14. After being Fried's workout partner last year, he's not likely to be intimidated by this senior group. One other major plus is his tremendous pinning ability which reduces both mat time and uncertainty.

At Mentor there'll only be one state berth to shoot for with Jackson having the best chance. He seems content to do just enough to win and that certainly reduces his margin for error. Flannery and Zirm (St. Joseph) are other contenders here. State qualifier Roche (St. Ignatius) has decided not to wrestle for the remainder of this year, and would have been a factor here.

At Hilliard, state qualifier Dill heads up a most representative field behind Tzagournis. Last year he drew Robbins in the first round and, seemingly, never recovered. Byers and Lauby are two other good contenders while Gorman Champ Lamb cannot be ignored. Lamb is very physical and looks to intimidate his foes. It may not be enough to earn him a state ticket.

State qualifiers Vilaboy and Ary head up a strong and deep Southwest contingent - at least that was true until Vilaboy decided to drop. Now state placer Ary stands alone at the top of this district. He barely made state qualification (by one point), but his fourth place finish there was complemented by a 5th place state result. I keep thinking that Xenia may drop all their middleweights, but that would not appear to benefit either Ary or Alex. Rapin and McDaniel are also in my Top Twelve and both are coming down from 152#. Both were first-round district losers who should do much better this year. It's only fair to mention that McDaniel defeated Tzagournis 1-0 in an early season bout at 152#. Geiser and Frederick are also rated with the latter boy having particularly good upset potential. Thorbaden (Beaver Creek) has been on the fringes of stardom this year and may yet reach that top level.

There is an interesting mixture of ingredients at Perry in what promises to be a frantic competition. Plouse missed state qualification by a single point last year and has closed to nearly the top of the second level boys. At the MIT, only Genovese beat him, while Hayden nipped him for the Hudson crown. He looks strong. Turner, just down from 152#, won handily at North Canton was a strong third at the MIT. He is physically bruising. Haynes is not well known -- the Warren Wrestling Club -- but he is a hammer. A semi-finalist last year in District competition, he lost to state runner-up Albert by one point and to Plouse by two. Physically talented, he could be a major surprise. Nicholson and Terrill are also rated over a carload of other people -- especially from the Youngstown area, such as Carkido (Fitch) and Rotunno (Boardman).

Now that Taylor has moved down, Lopez and Rastetter would seem to dominate the area. Lopez was 5th in Division III last year, but has adjusted well to his new environs. After being crushed by Taylor at Rogers, he returned the favor over an illness-plagued Taylor last week. Rastetter needs to adjust better to the more physical wrestlers that he'll see at the state level. The lower rated Lamb pushed him around and eventually beat him at the Gorman. It shouldn't have happened. Ovall and Lucy are other possibilities here, but that third spot is wide open. An interesting contender is Markham (Ashland), who placed twice in early season tournaments at 189# and now has moved down to 145#. It's not something you see every day.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOSHUA ROBBINS (ST. XAVIER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Petche (St. Joseph) | 12. Lunardi (Willoughby South) |
| 3. Millson (St. Edward) | 13. Longo (Boardman) |
| 4. Dennis (Fairfield) | 14. Good (Mansfield) |
| 5. Cummings (Dublin) | 15. Berter (LaSalle) |
| 6. Kunar (Ravenna) | 16. Hillis (Grahanna Lincoln) |
| 7. Alex (Xenia) | 17. Randall (Akron North) |
| 8. Philipps (Lorain Southview) | 18. Oden (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 9. Fishbaugh (Perrysburg) | 19. Sullivan (Talawanda) |
| 10. Lucius (Toledo Central Catholic) | 20. Redman (Akron East) |
| 11. Rush (Ashland) | 21. See (Westland) |

Somehow, I've just assumed over the years that both Robbins and Petche would each become state champs -- maybe more than once. Both were brilliant freshmen who blossomed early and won almost everything in sight -- everything that is, but a state title. So now it's come down to this; both seniors and at the same weight class and now only one being able to capture a state crown. Somehow it doesn't really seem fair, but then, what is.

Robbins has lost only three bouts in three years -- two to Fried (hardly a disgrace) and one very controversial one to Genovese. It adds up to a pair of state runner-up trophies and, perhaps, a certain measure of frustration. Petche, of course does have one state title -- in football -- where his game-saving tackle clinched the victory. But like Robbins he has been disappointed by a series of unfortunate incidents. As a sophomore he dominated the Mentor District -- but the next weekend two wrestlers he beat at Mentor were the finalists. Last year he wrestled brilliantly to defeat the favored Lee Wilson only to lose a narrow one point performance in a strangely contested finals bout.

Their bout will probably be the most eagerly awaited match-up in this (or the last several) tournaments. Nothing was diminished by an OCC final which Robbins won in OT when Petche's last second takedown in regulation was disallowed.

In my mind, Robbins is a more complete wrestler able to do more things and move against either leg. Petche is a little more one dimensional (but then that's what they said about Jim Brown), but has the explosive moves which can score big points. In their first meeting, Petche seemed almost timid at times and allowed Robbins to set the tempo. On that basis, Robbins will win every time. What Petche must do is pressure Robbins from the first second and disrupt his set-ups. Recent history has indicated that Southwest wrestlers have trouble with lots of in-your-face pressure as witnessed by crucial losses by Smith (to Barto), Schetter (to Collins), and last year by Robbins (to Genovese). Certainly, Robbins being on home ground may be a small factor here. At any rate, we can only hope that the pairings are such that this confrontation occurs in the proper setting of the finals.

Briefly, Robbins dominates the Dayton District with a number of competitors moving to 145#. I'm not sure such a strategy is always best. There will be a

lot of state places available both at the District and state level after Petche and Robbins are avoided by so many. Both Dennis and Alex are good enough to place, with Dennis, in particular, a strong candidate. Both are only juniors so their big opportunity will be next year. Berter and Sullivan are other possibilities.

While everyone analyzes Robbins versus Petche, there is a third element which cannot be overlooked. Adam Millson was also a super-soph two years ago, but injuries and weight problems have kept him out of view. Nevertheless, he is the only competitor who has any chance of beating the top two. He won the Minnesota Holiday in most impressive fashion, but again has been sidelined by injury. When healthy, his talents are most formidable. Should Robbins and Petche be bracketed together (please, no) then Millson could well be a finalist. The third spot at Mentor is totally up for grabs. I've listed Philipps, Lunardi, and Oden, but a half dozen other possibilities exist.

At Hilliard, Cummings seems to stand a little above the crowd with two impressive tournament victories, and past district experience (where he wrestled at 160#). Only a junior, he, too, will be a handful next year. See and Hillis are my top two candidates for remaining berths. Constable (Groveport) and Johnson (Marion Franklin) are other possibilities.

The Perry District will be dominated by confusion and uncertainty as a whole host of contenders try to sort out this weight class and its three attendant state berths. My favorite is Kunar who placed 3rd at Solon and 2nd at Kenston. A past district qualifier he seems marginally best here. Longo has been around a long time and is, perhaps, due for a state appearance. Frankly, I was not impressed at Solon, but that was in the season's first week. Randall and Redman are also strong contenders, but there is little to differentiate them from Whitaker (Warren Western Reserve) or Hubbard (Buchtel).

It's not going to be easy for the three Rogers qualifiers when they get to Cincinnati. Fishbaugh, a Division II state qualifier, seems best with Lucius, Rush, and Good somewhat below that standard. These folks do not seem to match up well with competition from other districts and may be rated too high. The exception is Fishbaugh who won at Hudson and has had some solid experience last year. Lucius, only 5th at the OCC, is powerful, but can be beaten on his feet. However, make one mistake as Cummings did and the match is over.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARK MOLLIKA (WALSH JESUIT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Davis (Marion-Franklin) | 13. Berlin (Alliance) |
| 3. Alyward (Kent Roosevelt) | 14. Deer (Waite) |
| 4. King (West Chester Lakota) | 15. Keiner (North Canton) |
| 5. McKeon (St. Edward) | 16. Dixon (Worthington) |
| 6. Margioras (Xenia) | 17. Frankmann (Brush) |
| 7. Uphouse (Hilliard) | 18. Bockbrader (Perrysburg) |
| 8. Drake (Clay) | 19. Sharper (Reynoldsburg) |
| 9. Carter (Fremont Ross) | 20. Zang (Oak Hills) |
| 10. DiLiberto (Eastlake North) | 21. Lee (Ravenna) |
| 11. Schmolinski (Stebbins) | 22. Ruiz (Lorain Southview) |
| 12. Auerbach (Bedford) | 23. Brunkala (Mentor) |

Up until this morning my feeling was that nobody would enter the state meet a bigger favorite than Mark Mollica. After all, Splete and Machovina seemed pretty much committed to 171# (which makes sense) while Petcher and Robbins look locked in at 152#. More importantly, Mollica has had a terrific season winning four major tournaments -- North Canton, Coventry, MIT and OCC -- with his closest final a rather comfortable 11-4 triumph. A state qualifier last year (after finishing 2nd to Petcher at Mentor), he was slightly off-form in the quarter-finals and lost a tough match. Only a junior, he will be one of the most heavily recruited of the sparkling class that will graduate in 1991.

Now, it seems, the weight class will be a little more complicated. Eric Davis, the pinning machine, seems poised to move down from 171#. Should that occur, Mollica will at last have a challenger worthy of his full, undivided attention. Last year Davis was undefeated and ranked #1 in the Central District when torn ligaments ended his season in mid-February. His explosiveness and strength have intimidated most rivals, and his experience (he was a state quarter-finalist as a sophomore) adds to his effectiveness. He will be a fine college wrestler. Nonetheless, I still believe Mollica will win. First, he cannot be intimidated and his physical tools are the equal of Davis. In addition, he is a more well-rounded competitor adept at every aspect of the sport. I look for him to avoid the big mistake early and out-wrestle Davis from the viewpoint of superior skills and technique. It could be a real barn-burner.

These top two wrestlers are a level above the rest of the field, and that second group is headed by Alyward and King. Again, Alyward, at the same district as Mollica, has been at 171# all year, but appears ready to drop. If comfortable at this lower weight, he would appear better positioned at 160# -- especially if Davis stays at 171#. Ironically, last year as a state qualifier at 152#, he met Mollica in the first round losing 4-1. It will be interesting to judge both's progress over the last 12 months should they hook up once more. The third qualifier should be Berlin who lost deep in the district consolations to Alyward last year. Clearly, it will be no surprise if this is the top trio here. Keiner and Lee were district qualifiers at this weight last year, and would have the best chance for qualification should one of the top boys stumble or Alyward opt

for 171#. Beason (Howland) is another potential candidate -- he, too, lost to Alyward in District consolations last year. Missing from this analysis is state qualifier Coleman (Kent Roosevelt) who is apparently ineligible at the present time. Should that be remedied, it would require some accommodation with Alyward and his plans.

King stands out at Dayton, and may be one of Mollica's toughest competitors. Only 16-11 last year, King has vastly improved under Coach Bob Stoll's tutelage and has dominated the area. He has already defeated state qualifier Margioras by five. Margioras and Schmolinski stand a respectful distance behind King and the former, in particular, has strong placement potential. Other possibilities are Zang, Rose (Miamisburg), and Smith (Sidney).

At Mentor the competition will seemingly be played out at a somewhat lower level. McKeon stands out, but his 16-5 loss to Mollica put things into perspective. He won the 32-team Minnesota Holiday, but missed both North Canton and the MIT with injuries and/or illnesses. As a first year varsity wrestler, he may suffer from inexperience, as well, but his talent elevated him slightly ahead of the other contenders here. DiLiberto and Frankmann have been solid with DiLiberto winning over the latter at Richmond Hts. and taking the Brunswick, while Frankmann captured the Kenston over Lee. While these may be the two conventional choices, watch for sophomore Mike Auerbach. Winner of the Solon Invitational, he was even more impressive with a strong 4th at the MIT losing only to Mollica (big) and Uphouse (by four). Ruiz and Brunkala are other possibilities with the former finishing second to DiLiberto at Brunswick and the latter sweeping to the Brecksville title -- including falls in both semis and finals.

Davis dominates the Hilliard District, Uphouse, however, is good and gave Mollica probably his toughest bout this year. Only a junior he was a sectional champ with a 23-5 record last year when he was crushed in the district's first round. This year he will go much farther. He was very impressive at the MIT winning the Most Falls award. Well behind him are Dixon, Sharper, and Knaul (Gahanna Lincoln) who will contend for the last berth. The one who qualifies will find state action very tough going, indeed.

Drake and Carter lead a Rogers contingent that remains somewhat a mystery, partly because they have very little exposure outside their own area. Drake won the Tiffin in most impressive fashion (an 18-4 final) and defeated Carter by three in their dual. Carter has won both the Rogers and the Mackey, and may be moving ahead of Drake. Both have placement potential. Deer won two bouts at Districts last year before succumbing 15-14 in OT. This year he has lost to Carter on a fall. Bockbrader, Akers (Tiffin), and Ruddy (Toledo Central Catholic) are other possibilities.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL SPLETE (ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Machovina (North Olmsted) | 13. Hager (East Liverpool) |
| 3. Davis (Marion Franklin) | 14. Crnic (Massillon Jackson) |
| 4. Smith (Valley Forge) | 15. Spellman (Akron Garfield) |
| 5. Alyward (Kent Roosevelt) | 16. Chaney (Sandusky) |
| 6. James (Massillon Perry) | 17. Saunders (Fairborn) |
| 7. Terwilliger (West Chester Lakota) | 18. Lime (Ashland) |
| 8. Planicka (St. Edward) | 19. Westerbeck (Sidney) |
| 9. Texter (St. Xavier) | 20. Caniglia (Hudson) |
| 10. Eckel (Upper Arlington) | 21. Laycox (Dayton Wayne) |
| 11. Buck (Maumee) | 22. Relford (Massillon) |
| 12. Farmer (Cleveland Hts.) | 23. Robinson/Pence (Worthington) |

Earlier in the year I would have bet the mortgage on Splete. After all, he lost a heartbreaking state final battle 11-10 when two takedowns were disallowed, and then finished a dazzling 3rd at the USWF National in Iowa. But, now, I'm not so sure and I am about one millimeter from going with Machovina. Here's why. Splete always a slow starter has set new records in that direction looking slow and lethargic. In addition, he seems distracted by weight considerations and, perhaps, football concerns (he was All-State). In his favor is a record of being sharp and confident at tourney time (boy, was he last year), and the almost mythical quality of John Storey's coaching ability with big men. Like Robbins and teammate Petcher (who was his junior high pal, as well) Splete was a prodigy. An unheard of 3rd at 138# as a freshman, 5th in the talent laden 152# class as a sophomore, and 2nd in 1989 is a resume that's difficult to match.

While Splete has struggled two-time state placer Machovina has looked marvelous. He never went into the third period at Brecksville, finishing each bout with an array of moves the envy of someone 50 pounds lighter. Should Splete falter, Machovina will be more than ready to stand on the top rung. In fact, the Mentor District is loaded here. Todd Smith, 4th at this weight last year, will return and cannot be overlooked. He was awesome at Solon, but reduced to mere mortal status at Brecksville. There he squandered a 14-2 lead against Farmer and lost 20-18. Two weeks later he shut him out 9-0 -- it's not easy to analyze input like that. At any rate, Smith appears to get serious about February and that will be none too soon. Despite his fine credentials, both Planicka and Farmer wait in the wings for another slip in concentration. This top five is exceptional, but only three will qualify.

I've discussed Davis already at 160#, but will rate him both places because of the uncertainty as to his final destination. He is without peer at Hilliard, although Eckel and Hager are both very good. Eckel lost only to state champ Scavuzzo at Brunswick and won easily at Beavercreek. He could place. Hager is about it for East Liverpool this year, but he'll match up well with anyone but the top four. Should Davis move to 160#, it opens the door for Robinson and Pizzuro (Westland).

At Perry there is some uncertainty of Alyward's final weight destination. At this level he is probably a step behind the top group and virtually even with James down from 189# last year. Still James won three district bouts at that level and will be a load at 171#. He won the North Canton in a real struggle with Sintobin. Spellman lost in his district semi-final on a penalty disqualification, thus forfeiting his chance for a qualifying spot last year, and this year was 2nd to Crnic at Wadsworth. Note, however, that Alyward destroyed Crnic 15-2 at the Hudson final. An unusual story is the junior Caniglia who last year had amazing weekends back-to-back. After being crushed twice by Freitag at the Sectionals, he went to Mentor as a fourth place finisher. There he pinned in the first two rounds and won a consolation bout to finish 4th and qualify for Columbus. After being pinned by Rardleman he won a consolation bout and ended up 6th -- with a 17-11 record. So far the magic has worn off this year and the "Cinderella" wrestler is back towards the end of the line.

Two tough wrestlers should dominate the Dayton District. State qualifier Texter and Terwilliger are very close to even and both should qualify. Right now Texter is injured, but that should heal shortly. Saunders, Westerbeck, and Laycox are other contenders, but they are quantum steps below the top two.

The Rogers District looks very weak at this weight. I've listed Buck, Chaney, and Lime, but that group is not a living definition of awesome. Martin (Waite), Wade (Whitmer), and Mezinger (Fremont Ross) are other possibilities, but, again, this qualification group will be eagerly sought as first round opponents.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LARRY KAUFMAN (WADSWORTH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Daniels (Dayton Wayne) | 13. Ward (Shaw) |
| 3. Straley (Uniontown Lake) | 14. Happ (Hilliard) |
| 4. Livengood (Painesville Riverside) | 15. McCane (Galion) |
| 5. Pence (Worthington) | 16. Riley (Akron Springfield) |
| 6. M. Jackson (Toledo Scott) | 17. Baker (St. Ignatius) |
| 7. Skala (Toledo St. John) | 18. Mazzaro (Elder) |
| 8. Pennix (West Chester Lakota) | 19. Sauer (Pickerington) |
| 9. Grant (Sandusky) | 20. Schott (Mayfield) |
| 10. Sankey (Akron Garfield) | 21. Carter (Fairmount) |
| 11. Joyce (St. Edward) | 22. Abend (Wooster) |
| 12. Campbell (Centerville) | 23. Eaton (Groveport) |

Currently, this is the largest unbroken streak of correctly forecasted winners now dating back to 1981. It will be a real challenge to extend this streak with six potential champions here, none of whom stands out from the others. Obviously, I've analyzed this a half dozen ways trying to maintain my unblemished record, and have finally chosen the Wadsworth star, Larry Kaufman. His victory would give that school its first state titlist in nearly 50 years -- when Sailors won -- ironically at this same weight -- in 1943.

Kaufman won one bout at Columbus last year before being eliminated by Pat Johnson and closed out his season at 27-3. This year he really hasn't been challenged winning the Wadsworth on all falls, but has not faced real tough competition for the most part. That will end at District time when he must emerge from the strongest and deepest of those five competitions. Included will be Straley, the MIT winner, who, last year, was one bout from wrestling Kaufman for the third state qualifying spot. He looks much stronger this year and has a reasonable chance of winning it all. Both Sankey and Abend are highly rated, although Kaufman has beaten both. They will be in the thick of the struggle for the third berth, along with the hard-charging Riley.

The huge junior, Jermaine Daniels, stands well above a crowd of other contenders at Dayton. Last year he went 25-2 as a sophomore at this weight and this season has already won at Hilliard, St. John's, and Tiffin. More of a control wrestler than a pinner, he has dominating strength and good moves. Well below him are Pennix and Campbell, while Mazzaro, Torrance (Colerain), and Carter trail ever further behind. It seems likely that this latter trio will duel for only one spot.

Livengood made a valiant qualification try last year, but fell just short losing to state runner-up Curiale and state 4th placer Johnson. This year all four qualifiers are gone and Livengood stands first at Mentor. Winner at both Richmond Hts. and Kenston, he should dominate here. Joyce and Baker have traded falls, but neither looks to have placement potential at States. The aptly named Hercules Ward finished 3rd at Brunswick after a last-second 5 point move erased his 8-4 lead. Solon champ Schott will also contend for a qualification berth, but faces some real obstacles. Myers (North Ridgeville) and Hoy (North Olmsted) are two other possibilities.

Pence nearly pinned Straley in the MIT final and then gave up a 5 point move that cost him an 8-7 loss. He looked very tough in pinning Joyce. It is well within the range of reason for him to win the whole thing. However, there is a big fall-off after him at Hilliard with Happ, Sauer, and Eaton the next level of contender.

At Rogers there are some interesting candidates. Michael Jackson has awesome physical ability and is gaining in technique as well. He won a district bout last year and ran roughshod through the Roger Invitational. Skala is a solid performer who doesn't lose to anyone except the top group. He could place with a good draw. Grant was 2nd to Fickell at Brecksville and may well grab a qualifying spot. Division II state qualifier McCane is another good performer as is Rivera (Clay) and Fleischman (DeVilbiss).

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LAMAR WASHINGTON (SHAW)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Myers (Wooster) | 13. Green (Fremont Ross) |
| 3. Holland (Eastmoor) | 14. Poehler (Hilliard) |
| 4. Hearn (West Carrollton) | 15. Sipe (Wilmington) |
| 5. Terebeniec (St. Edward) | 16. Pou (Sandusky) |
| 6. Durr (Nordonia) | 17. Ogletree (Trotwood Madison) |
| 7. Gall (Maple Hts.) | 18. First (Akron Garfield) |
| 8. Smith (Westland) | 19. Rogers (Lorain Southview) |
| 9. Helms (Dublin) | 20. Chiarmonte (Massillon Jackson) |
| 10. Miller (West Chester Lakota) | 21. Craig (Bowling Green) |
| 11. Frye (Rogers) | 22. Steiner (Beavercreek) |
| 12. Conaway (Kent Roosevelt) | 23. Wojciechowski (Bowsher) |

After two years of correctly forecasting the Division I heavyweight winner, I reverted to form last year and managed to bungle the selection process. But as a devoted Cleveland Indians fan, I know that next year is always just around the corner, and so, yet another opportunity at this weight class is present. Unfortunately, my usual optimism here founders on the fact that no real standout has been revealed at this weight. Clearly the Mentor District is far stronger than all the rest, but whether it will yield the eventual winner is uncertain. What's worse is that picking a champ from a loaded district is very dangerous since one mistake there is sayonara for the State Meet.

Nonetheless, I've gone with the 6'2", 270# genial giant from Shaw High School, Lamar Washington. He is a good enough athlete to run pass patterns from his tight end spot, and his combination of speed and power can be awesome. Last year he won the District title and one match at state before bowing out with successive losses to state champ Gregory (by two points) and state third placer Turner (in overtime). This year he lost to the much smaller Helm in a fiercely contested, hotly disputed 2-1 bout that revolved around an illegal slam and stalling. He needs to retain his poise when the going gets tough and stalling calls begin to be flung around with abandon. While size is certainly an advantage at heavyweight, the downside is that the smaller man often receives substantially more leeway on stalling. Four of my top seven are from Mentor and, remember, only three can qualify. Terebeniec's father is the St. Ed's strength coach and his sophomore son may be his finest creation. A 230# hammer, he lacks experience and a good shot, but he should win next year -- and maybe this year, too. Only my Division II and III picks, Wallis and Lowther, have defeated him. The mammoth Durr at 6'6", 290# for football was twice All-State and Division II Lineman-of-the-Year last season. Last year he was rather passive, but this year he has generally been much more aggressive -- and that's bad news for opponents. He, too, lost to Wallis in a schizophrenic draw at Brecksville which put Wallis, Durr, and Gall on the same side of the bracket -- but then beat Gall for 3rd. Gall missed state qualification by a single point last year in a 10-9 donnybrook that was decided in the last second. This year's 4th at Brecksville must be tempered by the strange draw and powerful competition. As a sophomore, Rogers beat state 4th Charlie Bass and state qualifier Bobish (on an illegal slam disqualification) before losing twice and missing States. Last year he did not

compete, but has returned this year with some success.

Myers took a 5th last year at Columbus and then placed high at the USWF in Iowa. He seems a natural selection, but the numbers don't all add up. He lost at Smithville 2-1 and appears to be better at freestyle. On a comparative basis, Myers lost to Turner at Columbus 11-1 while Washington was an overtime loser. Still, he is, obviously, very well qualified to take the title. Both heavyweight finalists were from Perry (as well as Myers' 5th) as it proved to be a powerhouse area. This year that will not happen with only Myers a true standout. Conaway, a move-in from Kenston, has been superb winning at both Hudson and Kenston -- and pinning in both finals. However, he is very light and could even opt for 189# -- although, generally, that hasn't worked as well as 189# going to heavyweight. First and Chiaromonte are also state threats with Esterle (Barberton) and Elias (Firestone) as possibilities. Trent Mascolla (Fitch) would have been a nearly sure qualifier and possible state placer, but injury cut short his season. He pinned future state titlist Gregory in this district, but then failed to qualify.

State qualifiers Holland and Smith lead a strong, deep Hilliard District. Neither survived first round action, both finished with 25-8 records, and both have performed well this year. The one major difference is, at least as far as I can tell, that Holland has won all of their individual match-ups. Right behind them is the smallish Helm -- winner at Brunswick over Washington. Holland pinned him last year in district competition. Poehler was a finalist at the MIT and won at Hilliard as he continues to improve. He has certainly met ordinary qualification standards, but may fall short here. Bateman (Worthington) is one other possibility.

I ranked former state qualifier Hearn 2nd last year, but the combination of a fearsome district and sub-par performance left him a point short of qualification. This year he should win his district with only Miller as serious competition. However, he may not match up well with the heavyweights from the Northeast. I've also rated Sipe, Ogletree, and Steiner, but expect a few surprises after the first two.

At Rogers none of the heavyweights look like placement material. Frye is nominally first, but Holland decked him in 18 seconds last year. While that certainly has a flukish sound, it does not, on the other hand, make one anxious to favor Frye the next time they meet. His spirited competition with Green -- a move-in from Gibsonburg -- may foreshadow a more serious battle at the district level. Pou was 2nd at Brecksville, but, again, he was the prime beneficiary of ludicrous pairings.

TEAMS

1. St. Joseph -- A quartet of brilliant wrestlers is the heart and soul of this team. Mihalic, St. John, Petche and Splete are all potential finalists who could score as many as 90 points alone. Gron and Gerome are potential state qualifiers who could add to that total if things go their way. One major positive is that the top four are so good, that there is very little downside on the 90. The one exception might be Splete who still does not look in top shape. However, if Coach John Storey is ever to win a state title, this is the year.

2. St. Edward -- By the numbers, this team should win the title by 40 points. However, they seem unable to structure a set line-up that will provide continuity and consistency for their team. The major challenge is to get everybody comfortable at the correct weight and to keep everyone healthy. The three-man qualifying set-up at Mentor hurts them -- since it's likely to eliminate several of their big men. The lack of a stable line-up also makes them more susceptible to the big upset. A key factor is a healthy and effective Millson.
3. Walsh Jesuit -- This appears to be the team of the '90s. Currently Leemaster and Mollica are already stars with Sabo, Franklin, and, maybe, Ford almost there. A major plus is the move from Mentor to Perry which could double the number of state qualifiers for them. Just remember, next year they'll all be back and joining them will be another influx of potential stars from the North Akron Wrestling Club.
4. Massillon Perry -- This is really a three-man team with Marcelli, McCollins, and James virtually the entire show. If McFarland or Tausch could help they could threaten Walsh.
5. St. Xavier -- Robbins is a sure finalist while Vilaboy should do reasonably well at his new weight 140#. Texter, a former state qualifier, needs to get healthy, while Arnold or somebody needs to pitch in.
6. West Chester Lakota -- Bob Stoll is one of the best coaches in Ohio and in just two years has fashioned a fine team. An excellent dual meet equad they don't have the big star who'll pick up 20 or 25 points in Cincinnati.
7. Xenia -- They have some great middleweights in Lawless, Taylor, Ary, Alex, and Margioras, but the key will be if Brent White returns to form. If so, they could be in the top five.
8. Upper Arlington -- Again a two man nucleus -- Stout and Tzagournis -- lead the way. However, if Burkle is at the right weight he could be a huge help, and Eckel may be able to chip in, as well.
9. North Canton Hoover -- With a great coach like John Tolarchyk, this team always does well. This year it's a crop of great middleweights starting with Marchette and running through Keiner. Marchette is terrific while Turner and Ken LaCure can score well. The key is the freshman Brian LaCure and help from Keiner and Delmonaco.
10. Painesville Riverside -- It's difficult to know how well they'll do in real pressure situations. Jim Richner could be a finalist while Livengood, Maruc, and K. Richner could score heavily. That leaves Bertone or Kimble left to pull a real surprise.
11. Worthington -- A team that really is more suited to dual meets, but they should qualify a lot of boys for states. The question will be can they score there and so far only Allen and Pence seem ready to do so.
12. Nordonia -- Andrassy should score 20+ points himself while Durr can really contribute should he surmount the Mentor District. If Driscoll gets hot at the weak 135# class, they'll be just fine.

DIVISION II

This classification continues to provide the best in both team and individual competition. State finalists came from every area and the team competition was again close. This year should repeat that very successful formula.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHARLIE SAMPSON (MARLINGTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Dan Smith (Lexington) | 12. Bernardo (Trinity) |
| 3. Patterson (Cambridge) | 13. Sargent (Dayton Carroll) |
| 4. Santamaria (Kenston) | 14. Scott (Watkins Memorial) |
| 5. Stoll (Milan Edison) | 15. Shaw (Claymont) |
| 6. Kitchen (Twinsburg) | 16. Enright (Lebanon) |
| 7. Sommer (Crestwood) | 17. Shields (Edison South) |
| 8. Kersten (Oak Harbor) | 18. Benham (Northridge) |
| 9. Brown (Sylvania Northview) | 29. Hammond (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 10. Lang (Brecksville) | 20. McKinney (Clermont NE) |
| 11. Incorvia (Padua) | 21. Brettell (Steubenville) |

One of the recurring problems in analyzing the 103# class is a lack of quality reference points. By that I mean several successful performers from previous years in each district to serve as guideposts when analyzing newcomers. Unfortunately, this is a weight where there are many first year varsity wrestlers, and which, for the most part, successful wrestlers have outgrown. For example, this year there are only two returning state qualifiers to serve as benchmarks, but, thankfully, one of them was runner-up last year and seems determined to do even better this season. Charlie Sampson is a high percentage wrestler who allows few points and clings tenaciously to a lead. In the first three rounds of both the District and States combined, he permitted only five points. The problem, then, was Doug Wright who defeated him for both titles in relatively close bouts, but who has departed for 112#. With his consistency and steadfast approach, Sampson is a solid favorite at this weight.

The remainder of the Firestone District is in disarray with wrestlers peaking one weekend and dropping into deep valleys the next. However, I believe the overall quality of the group is high suggesting that all of the four that qualify behind Sampson will be a threat at States. Kitchen won both the Hudson and Solon tourneys, and would seem to be a cinch second choice, but Santamaria beat him 10-3 and placed at both Kenston and North Canton. Sommer, only a freshman, beat the impressive Ford of Division I Walsh Jesuit and took a solid 3rd at Kenston. Lang won the Brecksville and has swept through his dual competition while Bernardo won two matches at Districts last year and lost to state champ Wright by about the same margin as Sampson. He also looked good at the OCC. Incorvia, too, has had a successful season winning at Avon Lake and placing at Brecksville and the OCC. In total, they consist of seven of my top twelve choices, but only

five will qualify -- and that ignores the substantial threats of Radke (Solon), Ross (Highland) and Kolonick (Olmsted Falls).

Sampson will face threats from other parts of the state, as well. Smith missed qualifying for Columbus by two points last year, and finished 25-7. This year his only loss was at the Gorman to the excellent Division I freshman, Jason Allan. Two other district qualifiers, Stoll and Brown, will be challenged by some excellent newcomers -- especially the rapidly improving Kersten. In his first varsity season, he was 3rd at the MIT (losing only to Ford), 2nd at Oak Harbor (losing to Dernlan), and champ at Sandusky St. Mary's. Two Central District representatives, Hammond and Scott, are also top-flight threats at the Lexington District. This should be just as rugged a competition here as the one at Firestone, although at a slightly lower level.

Patterson was dominated most of last year in his own district by senior Val Kline. However, he finally beat Kline for the district title only to lose a tight one point decision in the first round of States. This year expect him to go much farther as he'll likely bring a nearly undefeated record to Cincinnati. Gaining on him are Shields and Shaw (a 2-1 loser to Patterson at Barnesville) who look stronger every day. Brettell and Buckley (Union Local) look to be left out.

The Dayton District is quite weak. I've rated Sargent, Enright, Benham, and McKinney with the first two a step ahead of the latter pair. While each has had some successes in their own area, they are likely to find things far more difficult at the State Meet.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD HILL (HIGHLAND)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Bowers (Rocky River) | 12. Zeno (Margaretta) |
| 3. Noble (Lebanon) | 13. B. Taylor (Clyde) |
| 4. Dave Smith (Lexington) | 14. Byers (Urbana) |
| 5. Schork (Solon) | 15. V. Taylor (Morgan) |
| 6. Brady (Little Miami) | 16. Miller (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 7. Wright (Crestwood) | 17. Lunsford (Circleville) |
| 8. Eisenman (Avon Lake) | 18. Roe (Meadowbrook) |
| 9. Meade (Watkins Memorial) | 19. Hess (Kenton Ridge) |
| 10. Cwiak (Lake Catholic) | 20. McDaniel (Claymont) |
| 11. Glover (St. Paris Graham) | 21. Corso (Perkins) |

Last year 112# was one of the finest, deepest weight classes in Division II and that should hold true once again in 1990. It will be a bracket of great individual achievement with outstanding representatives from virtually every portion of the state. It possesses more than a dozen returning state qualifiers -- including a defending champ, two former runners-up, and three other former placers.

And, as happened last year, my selection, after excruciating deliberation, remains former state runner-up Todd Hill. At least rate me high on consistency.

Last year Hill drew the very tough Randall in the first round at Columbus and lost a narrow 2-1 decision costing him any chance at state placement. Eventual champ, Brian Slates, cruised to the title winning 11 of 12 tourney bouts (Sectional, District, and State) with little trouble. His only struggle was a 12-9 OT win over Hill in the Districts. Besides, Hill is due for some good luck. He missed North Canton when his team was snowed out and he had to default at the MIT (when he had three teeth smashed in the quarter-finals). He came back the next day and got 3rd anyway. Bowers, another state runner-up, will also be at Firestone and he is also exceptional. Third as a sophomore, second as a junior, that series suggests that a championship in the senior year makes sound mathematical sense. It also makes good wrestling sense as Bowers is certainly capable of winning it all. He beat Hill 4-2 last year after losing to him several times as a sophomore. The sophomore, Schork, has been at 119# all year will tower over Hill and Bowers. He had a sensational freshman year at 103#, although seemingly "running out of gas" at Districts. This year he'll be competing in Division II with a whole new set of opponents and should do very well. That leaves, believe it or not, defending state champ Doug Wright ranked 4th in this district and 7th overall. That speaks more about the quality of competition than to any shortcomings of Wright, although he has had a shaky season at both 119# and 112#. I also noted, after the fact, that I coincidentally had rated him 7th last year when he took it all. Could it happen again? Eisenman and OCC champ Cwiak also make the top ten group, but only one berth is left open should my top picks come through. At the same time, Miller (from the same school as Slates) has qualification potential.

Noble heads an experienced southwest contingent. Last year as a freshmen he lost to state champion Wright in an overtime semi-final bout and finished a strong 3rd. This year he has won three major titles against primarily Division I competition. He scored points by the bushel -- but Hill and Bowers may be just too strong for him. Brady and Glover were also both place winners in 1990, but will be pushed by the Firestone contingent to duplicate that feat. Glover, in particular, may have problems winning at this weight. I've ranked Byers and Hess as the possible fourth qualifier, but they rate well behind the top trio. Monebrake (Camden Preble Shawnee) and Wright (Valley View) are two other possibilities.

The elder Smith heads the Lexington District contingent. Twice a state qualifier, he has twice won his opening bout only to lose in the quarter-finals and be eliminated. Two years ago Hill put him out while last year it was Randall. It would seem to be his turn for a middle-to-low place, but it won't be easy. Certainly the mid-season resignation of the long-time Lexington coach could prove to be a distraction. Lunsford, B. Taylor, and Zeno are all past state qualifiers, but I'm not sure they'll match up well with the Firestone and Dayton contingents. Only Taylor won a bout last year and Brady eliminated him in the quarter-finals. I think Lunsford may be vulnerable at the District level with Meade several steps ahead right now. Corso, too, is among a host of other possible candidates.

The Tri-Valley entrants are likely to be in trouble once they reach Cincinnati. V. Taylor did win a state bout last year, but then Wright and Glover exposed a real weakness on his feet. He may, however, still be best here. Roe and McDaniel are the two qualification guesses as I've had trouble coming up with possibilities in this district. Two possibilities are Napier (Hillsboro) and Morosko (New Lexington).

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON ZAMISKA (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Humphrey (Padua) | 12. Villalon (Clyde) |
| 3. Randall (St. Paris Graham) | 13. Byerman (Loveland) |
| 4. Sias (Solon) | 14. Muzykoski (Licking Valley) |
| 5. Trunck (Eaton) | 15. Toukonen (Jefferson) |
| 6. Tecco (Buckeye) | 16. Kersten (Oak Harbor) |
| 7. Shipley (John Glenn) | 17. Shaw (Claymont) |
| 8. Goecke (Rossford) | 18. Puthoff (Purcell) |
| 9. McCauley (Louisville) | 19. Mancuso (Milan Edison) |
| 10. Ruehling (Canal Fulton NW) | 20. Llewellyn (Steubenville) |
| 11. Goodson (Union Local) | 21. Huhn (Goshen) |

This is a weight class with something of a schizophrenic personality. The first half dozen or so wrestlers are all first-rate with legitimate finalist possibilities, but after that the quality quotient erodes rapidly. In terms of the potential titlist, only four candidates appear to be reasonable choices. Each has a particular strength and weakness that makes the draw crucial. With the right match-ups any of the quartet could win.

My choice is the brilliant, but not always dependable Zamiska. Wrestling mainly at 125# he has already won at Solon, Hudson, and Kenston, twice winning with final round falls. On sheer talent he is an easy winner, but in the past has let external situations and injuries impair his effectiveness. A runner-up at 98# in 1987, this is the first year since then he has wrestled at a comparable level. He defeated Sias 11-5 at Solon, and stands poised to reach the finals once again. Humphrey, a Division I state qualifier last year, pulled a major upset this year by beating the marvelous Leemaster. Very methodical and analytical, he will not lose to emotion and will not beat himself. Sias has not looked nearly as good as last year, but I respect his ability to bounce back. Another Division I state qualifier, he may well peak right at tourney time. Three on my top four out of Firestone, but there is much more depth there. State qualifiers Ruehling and Toukonen would seem to be natural choices for the last two berths, but I see them as slight underdogs in this venture. Instead Tecco and McCauley have made rapid progress and moved ahead of their two, more experienced competitors. Again, seven high caliber contestants and five spots.

The one candidate that could muscle right through the top Cleveland trio is Randall. Already a two-time state qualifier, he finished 3rd last year losing only to the red-hot Slates. He was terrifically impressive at the MIT -- dominating Gustovich, for example -- until Leemaster exposed a weakness on his feet. He is most resilient, however, and will be a major threat to any opponent. Trunck is probably next best at Dayton as this former state qualifier and 5th place finisher looks to rebound from 1989 which saw him knocked out in first round District action. Byerman, Puthoff, and Huhn appear to be the chief combatants for the last two spots.

Shipley dominates the field at Tri-Valley. Winning two bouts at Columbus he latched onto the 6th place trophy, and may be able to improve slightly upon that

result this year. The rest of that district does not appear to be a fearsome lot with Goodson, Shaw, and Llewellyn marginally better than several other competitors.

There are probably twenty potential state qualifiers at Lexington, but, in reality, probably no potential state placers. State qualifier Goecke is in my Top Ten, but that may be generous. I've also rated Villalon, Muzykoski, Kersten, and Mancuso, but that is, at best, an educated guess. Silcox (Perkins), Murray (Bryan), and Maynard (Fairfield Union) are other equally plausible alternatives. If the Oak Harbor team gets hot, Kersten who has recently won two tourneys may get swept along in the excitement and vault ahead a few places.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MATT MCCOY (VINCENT WARREN)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Calhoun (Bethel-Tate) | 13. Gainey (Youngstown Ursuline) |
| 3. Abbott (St. Paris Graham) | 14. Hockenberry (John Glenn) |
| 4. Possage (Beaver Local) | 15. Knight (Steubenville) |
| 5. Hall (Tipp City) | 16. Kile (Bellevue) |
| 6. W. Giffen (Watkins Memorial) | 17. Baker (Union Local) |
| 7. McAtee (Big Walnut) | 18. Puckrin (Perkins) |
| 8. Falcioni (North Royalton) | 19. Mullenix (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 9. Withrow (Triway) | 20. Saft (Cambridge) |
| 10. Lucy (Loveland) | 21. Akenhead (Marlington) |
| 11. S. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) | 22. Nelson (Ashtabula) |
| 12. Bumgartner (Marysville) | 23. Cope (New Richmond) |

This appears to be a rather weak weight class that may well attract some of the excess 130's and, perhaps, a few 119's as well. Only the Dayton District appears well-stocked at this weight, but, even so, none of the qualifying quartet seems capable of defeating two-time state qualifier Matt McCoy. Last year Heath Eddlebutte became the first state champion produced at Vincent Warren, and McCoy may make it back-to-back state titles for the school. Very strong, McCoy has been at 130# this year and will be extremely difficult to score on at this weight. A crucial factor will be the level of improvement on his feet.

Besides McCoy, the Tri-Valley District boasts a second, two-time state qualifier in Ben Hockenberry. While he has not matched McCoy in his success level at States where he is yet to win a bout, he is still a solid competitor. Part of that state problem is probably in reaction to what appears to be a weak schedule. Knight, Baker, and Saft seemed to have battled against one another all year and that will probably continue for the last qualifying berth. My guess is, however, that Hockenberry might be at risk as well.

As mentioned earlier, the Dayton District is loaded. Calhoun was 5th in Division III last year after reaching the semi-finals. This season he beat Division I placewinner Sean Murray in the Cincinnati Holiday finals and has dominated lesser foes. He is a very classy performer. Abbott is very tall and a pinner who was a Division II semi-finalist last year and finished 4th. This year he won at Graham

and Licking Hts., but lost early and often at the MIT and failed to place. Don't expect that to happen again. Hall has qualified for the state meet three consecutive years finishing 4th two years ago at 103#. A solid performer he is strong placement potential. I've also rated Lucy and Mullenix, but they trail the top threesome by a wide margin. Jenkins (Indian Lakes), Cope (New Richmond), and Pencil (Springfield Northwestern) are other possibilities.

Rather unusually the Firestone District lacks much firepower at this weight. Passage wrestled beautifully both District and state weekends and captured a 4th place medal. How he'll do at 125# is still open to question, but it's far better than the 119# option. One strong positive is that he never seems to lose a bout he ought to win and he never panics and beats himself. Those attributes should propel him to another state placement. The rest of the cast from this district is still rather mysterious. Falcioni was 2nd at Brunswick, but his District experience last year was two losses. Still three years butting heads with three-time state champ Shawn Nelson has to be worth a lot. Bailey was a freshmen state qualifier but has had troubles since then. This is his last opportunity to cash in on the great start. Gainey has been around forever, and that experience should begin paying off. Withrow beat Abbott at the MIT and if that kind of performance continues, I've rated him too low.

At Lexington, Giffen and McAtee would appear poised to dominate. I particularly like Giffen, but he'll need more than that to place. McAtee has bounced between 125# and 130#, but if he wants to do well, there's no real choice. The last two spots are wide open with those listed and Patton (Shelby) my best prospects.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOHN McCUMBER (ROSSFORD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Haring (Twinsburg) | 12. Duck (Paulding) |
| 3. Harris (CAPE) | 13. Harris (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 4. Mackin (Lake Catholic) | 14. Berner (Springfield NW) |
| 5. Carcelli (Benedictine) | 15. Itnyre (Marysville) |
| 6. Rodriguez (Revere) | 16. Sabatino (Martins Ferry) |
| 7. Orick (St. Marys Memorial) | 17. Rupanovic (Buckeye) |
| 8. Shanteau (Oak Harbor) | 18. Magliano (Turpin) |
| 9. Wallace (Camden Preble Shawnee) | 19. Brown (Washington Court House) |
| 10. Baranek (Akron Hoban) | 20. McBride (St. Clairsville) |
| 11. Fondale (New Lexington) | 21. Zbikowski (Olmsted Falls) |

There's no doubt about it -- Brian Haring was the sensation of the 1989 state Tournament. Not only did he pull off, perhaps, the greatest upset in tourney history, but he did so with dash and style. Knowing that he was to meet the nearly invincible, two-time state champion Nick Cianciola in the finals -- a wrestler with 100 consecutive wins -- he purchased a T-shirt that read "I am not number 101". He then made good on the inscription by pinning Cianciola (who was ahead) with one second left in the second period. What made it even more of a fairytale ending was that Haring has never won a tournament during the regular

season. It all began for him in late February when he swept to Sectional, District, and finally, a state title.

Meanwhile, at 125#, heavy favorite John McCumber endured a somewhat different outcome. This three-time state qualifier was a solid, if not overwhelming, favorite for his first state crown. Dominant throughout the season he was 33-0 entering the finals, but wrestled well below his normal level and dropped a 7-4 finale. It gave him his third state place winning trophy, but never the top prize.

This year these two stories converge at 130#. Again Haring has failed to take top honors in all three tournaments he has entered, losing all three final-round bouts. McCumber, on the other hand, has not been quite so dominant -- losing twice at Kenston and finishing behind Haring (however, they did not meet). Nonetheless, I'm again going with McCumber whose turn, I believe, has finally come. After all, he did beat Haring 16-3 at Kenston last year and his two defeats this season were to Division I stars Ranallo and Van Cucha. I think McCumber will beat Haring again this year -- no matter what kind of T-shirt he wears this year.

Eight of the top-ranked wrestlers will participate in the Firestone District. The competition will be incredibly fierce from the very first round, and no participant, not even Haring, will be guaranteed a qualifying birth. Mackin, a state qualifier, has been injured much of the year, but was a strong 2nd at the OCC. He lost a 15-11 heartbreaker in the first round of States last year. Carcelli and Baranek are also past state qualifiers -- the former in 1988 and the latter in Division III -- who have performed well this year. Rodriguez looked awesome at Brunswick and if he wrestles at that level on a consistent basis, he will challenge anyone. Harris and Rupanovic have also done well this year and would certainly qualify from any other area. However, at Firestone they'll need to be in top form and lucky to make it to Cincinnati.

Harris is an explosive wrestler who was outslicked by Pariano in the state quarter-finals 6-5. He dominated his district and so will be relatively fresh for the rigors of state competition. On the other hand, he will be meeting some battle-hardened veterans from the Firestone wars who'll not be intimidated, in the least, by his past record. Wallace was a state qualifier at 135# last year and has moved down for 1990. He looked overmatched at the higher weight last year, and may be better positioned this season. He'll need the right draw to place. Berner and Magliano are my other two choices for qualification as there is apparently little depth here.

McCumber stands far above the crowd at Lexington. State qualifiers Shanteau and Orick should nail down the second and third qualifying spot, but the last one is wide open. Both of these boys were at 135# last year and Orick won their district bout 10-7. At Columbus both were first round losers. So far, Shanteau has not progressed as I anticipated. He has had problems with lesser-ranked wrestlers although he has been up at 135#. Orick wrestles an almost invisible (to me) schedule, but has been a solid winner when observed. Again, placement is not impossible for either. I've listed state qualifier Duck and Itnyre as close contenders for the final opening. Duck has missed much of the year and has just recently returned to the line-up. Itnyre leads a weak Columbus contingent into Lexington with Shoemaker (London) and Gibson (Utica) as other possibilities. All three were district qualifiers last year, but won only one bout between them.

The Tri-Valley contingent will be very weak. Sabatino, perhaps, because he has to workout with Sidon every day has shown real improvement and along with Fondale heads the pack. Brown and McBride are other possibilities and if Klempa (Bellaire) gets comfortable with the weight he may surpass either of them. Brown has always seemed to me on the verge of great things, but has never been able to cash in -- maybe 1990 will be his good luck charm. McCown (Ironton), Tovvell (Meadowbrook) and Kline (Union Local) are other random thoughts.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BABE SIDON (MARTINS FERRY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Henderson (St. Paris Graham) | 12. McKendrick (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 3. Pariano (Fairview Park) | 13. Shaw (Clermont NE) |
| 4. Cerar (Lake Catholic) | 14. Kline (Triway) |
| 5. R. Giffen (Watkins Memorial) | 15. Scherf (Oak Harbor) |
| 6. Hardman (Akron Hoban) | 16. Weider (Bellevue) |
| 7. Fritz (Solon) | 17. Recker (Roger Bacon) |
| 8. Thom (Perkins) | 18. Leemasters (Edison South) |
| 9. Chad Connelly (Rocky River) | 19. I. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 10. Gibbons (Dayton Northridge) | 20. Romp (Rossford) |
| 11. Bryant (Kenston) | 21. Jones (Claymont) |

I once had a boss who had to be handled in a certain way in order to achieve optimum results. On all important issues it was crucial to be the last person to see him because he gave the most weight to the opinions and facts he last received. So it is at this weight. I saw Pariano the first week of the season and tentatively decided to place him first. Then at Christmas I saw Henderson at MIT and elevated him to the top ranking. Now just recently, I had my first 1990 look at Sidon and you'll note his name now appears at the top of the list. Let's take a closer look at each and see if you agree.

Pariano had a marvelous freshman year finishing 4th in the state while displaying unbelievable elan and cool for one so young. Seemingly never flustered, he constantly improved and always did better the second time with an opponent. This year he has remained unbeaten and looks much stronger physically. He still is on the steep portion of the improvement curve. Henderson won the MIT in extremely impressive fashion and is a hard-nosed, physical wrestler. A state qualifier last year, he was injured in the consolations and placed 6th. He could easily win the state title. Sidon is the defending state champion at this weight class and he is even stronger than last year. A big problem could be that unlike Pariano and Henderson, no one has pushed him this year. It will not be nearly so easy at the state level. Still Sidon has to be rated the favorite after seeing all three, but the competition will be furious. Fortunately they all emerge from different districts so the pairings should be good.

As I said, Sidon is light years ahead of the rest of his district. Leemasters and Jones are nominal choices for the last two spots, but nobody else here will make an impact in Cincinnati. Kyer (St. Clairsville) pin winner over a West

Virginia state champion, and Doyle (Tri Valley) are other possibilities here. Sidon will certainly be the least tested district champion.

Henderson, too, will not face severe competition at his district, although there'll be two returning state qualifiers in the field. Gibbons missed reaching the semi-finals at Columbus by a single point last year and wrestled well throughout the meet. Nonetheless, he lost on a technical fall to Henderson in the Graham final. Shaw was a district finalist at 125# last year, but he also matches up poorly with the resurgent Henderson. Of the two, Gibbons has the best low placement chances. My top choice for the fourth berth is Recker, although Gatti (Turpin) is another possibility. Recker missed state qualification by a single bout last year.

In contrast to the other two, Pariano faces all kinds of headaches at Firestone. Cerar has wrestled exceptionally well all year at 140# and may be even more effective at 135#. He won at Kenston and was a strong 4th at the OCC. Last year he was a first round upset victim in the District, but that is unlikely to occur again. Fritz was a Division I competitor last year and lost an overtime bout for state qualification. He has had an off-and-on season culminating in a horrendous loss to Bryant. I still rate him highly. Hardman dropped his first round state bout to Henderson, but was certainly competitive. He lost to Division I star Wilson in overtime at the Hudson finals so he will be a daunting obstacle for any opponent. That's four very solid performers at Firestone, but there are another four who may be just as strong. Connelly was a state qualifier at 145# last year and has dropped two weight classes in 1990. He was the prestigious Brecksville champ. Bryant, always a solid performer, languished behind Kenston's great middleweights last year, but has recently caught fire in the second half of the season. He crushed Fritz and pinned everyone else, and may be better than rated here. McKendrick, a former state qualifier, suffered growing pains last season, but now appears set at 135#. Battershell (Marlington) and Zabor (Revere) are yet two other strong performers with solid credentials over the past two years. Ignore them at your own risk.

There is not nearly this quality of depth at Lexington. However, I am impressed by Giffen who was a state alternate at this weight last year. He has won several tournaments and his only major setback was to Henderson -- by 13 points. Thom handily defeated Division I state qualifier Miller 9-3 to win the Tiffin and has been a whirlwind during a tough dual meet schedule. He's ready for state qualification. I anticipate Scherf at this weight and along with Weider they complete the projected four man qualifying team from this area. Alvarez and the fast-improving Romp are two other possibilities.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: GREG WOODS (TRIWAY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Parsley (Bethel-Tate) | 12. Luciano (West Geauga) |
| 3. Jones (Canfield) | 13. Didion (Bellevue) |
| 4. Chris Connelly (Rocky River) | 14. Donaldson (Milton Union) |
| 5. Becks (Lake Catholic) | 15. McAdow (London) |
| 6. Crow (Brookside) | 16. Pipo (Edison South) |
| 7. Garcia (Norwalk) | 17. Belivanakis (CAPE) |
| 8. Camden (Turpin) | 18. Buckley (Union Local) |
| 9. Gifford (Miami Trace) | 19. Merhar (Brecksville) |
| 10. Kozinski (Bucyrus) | 20. Frisch (Oak Harbor) |
| 11. L. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) | 21. Boring (West Holmes) |

This is a very unbalanced weight class in that five of the six contenders will struggle at Firestone while the remainder of the state is relatively weak. It would not be a shock if all four semi-finalists were from the Northeast District and what that suggests is, in that area, the battle will be to get to Cincinnati. That accomplished, the odds for a high finish are quite strong.

Last year, Woods won the District crown at 130# and then watched in dismay as three of the four wrestlers who finished below him placed at the state -- and he didn't. Part of that was the misfortune of drawing the enigmatic Teasdale in the second round when he was hot and the other reason was the unfair consolation system which allowed inferior wrestlers a second chance and not him. Nevertheless, Woods is even better this year and his brilliant showing at the MIT won him substantial OW consideration. He is so sharp on his feet that he will be very difficult to defeat. Jones, 4th last year, is as steady as a rock, doing the same things every bout and never giving away anything. Winner at both Solon and Brunswick, he is very difficult to score against. Last year Sidon beat him by only two points. Many people have expected stardom from Chris Connelly for years -- and the former state qualifier seems set to deliver. He had an especially big win in the finals at Brecksville, and is one of the mainstays of a fine Rocky River team. After finishing 4th in the state as a sophomore he had a horrible pairing at last year's District meet. In the first round he lost to eventual state runner-up Futo and then was eliminated when Woods beat Futo. State qualifier Becks has now grown into an almost muscular 140# with blinding speed and excellent moves. Injured all year, in his first week back he lost a criteria decision in the OCC finals. He could be Wood's biggest obstacle. Finally, former state qualifier Crow cannot be overlooked. A real pinner, he "stubbed his toe" in first round district action last year. It's not likely to happen again. This quintet is exceptionally good, but not above possible challenges from below. I've listed Luciano and Merhar, but several others such as Joseph (Norton) are possibilities.

Parsley, 3rd in Division III last year, had absolutely no trouble winning the Cincinnati Holiday Tournament against basically Division I competition. He is miles beyond the rest of his district and could be the only real out-of-district challenge for the Firestone qualifiers. Camden and Donaldson may have low place potential with just the right draw, but that's a low probability play. The

fourth spot is wide open with Belivanakis, Jenkins (Kenton Ridge), and Suddendorf (Purcell) as possibilities.

The field at Lexington is crowded, but not particularly distinguished. I've rated Garcia and Kozinski at the top, and I'm particularly impressed with the first of those two. Last year he lost a tough district semi-final bout to Tomor and then dropped his go-to-state bout 11-10. This year he won at Edison and Fremont St. Joe and lost a narrow semi-final at Toledo St. John. Kozinski was at absolutely the strongest weight class at the Gorman and finished 3rd losing only to two-time Division I state qualifier Andy. Didion, whose father, if memory serves, was Bellevue's last state champ, is unlikely to challenge at that level, but has been very competitive all year. He won the Bellevue Invitational and narrowly missed another win at Oak Harbor. Both Central District Alvarez and McAdow possibilities have strong past records, but may be a step behind their Northwest counterparts. One wrestler to be aware of is the current 145# contender Frisch who is destined for this class.

At Tri-Valley the cupboard is nearly bare. The one exception is Gifford who performed very well at the Greater Miami Valley Tourney. Essentially unknown around the state, he may be a "sleeper" in this field. I've also listed Pipo, Buckley and Boring from this area, but those are pretty much guesses. Halaiko (New Lexington) and McClain (Warsaw River View) are other possibilities.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: GREG GENOVESE (SOLON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2. Vcelka (Union Local) | 13. T. Miller (Watkins Memorial) |
| 3. S. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) | 14. McKinney (Warrensville) |
| 4. Bowyer (Beaver Local) | 15. Cartwright (Washington Court House) |
| 5. Strunk (Bellevue) | 16. Blank (Ashtabula Edgewood) |
| 6. Benham (Dayton Northridge) | 17. Babcock (Millbury Lake) |
| 7. Henry (Claymont) | 18. Dunn (Hamilton Ross) |
| 8. Ryan (Jefferson) | 19. Ranft (Bexley) |
| 9. Wynn (Blanchester) | 20. Alexander (West Holmes) |
| 10. Narewski (Avon Lake) | 21. Schonauer/Skok (Painesville Harvey) |
| 11. Loper (Greenon) | 22. O'Bryan (Warsaw River View) |
| 12. Hurrell (Oak Harbor) | 23. Culler (Buckeye) |

Defending Division I state champ Greg Genovese will look to defend his laurels in Division II competition this year. He will be a strong favorite based on his own enormous skills, and the relative weakness of the field he will face. Last year he upset the pre-meet favorite Josh Robbins in the finals with a game plan based on constant in-your-face pressure. It worked and was Robbins' only defeat in the last three to someone other than Alan Fried. A fine halfback in football, Genovese combines great quickness and mobility with tremendous conditioning. He'll run most of his Division II (or Division I) competitors right into the ground.

One thing Solon will have to learn is a whole new district regimen, but with contenders like Genovese that should not be difficult. State qualifier Bowyer stands as a second choice at this weight class and he is competitive with everyone but Genovese. He won one bout at Columbus last year before being shut out by long-time nemesis Jones of Canfield. He is in line for a low to medium place in 1990. State qualifier Ryan has been at 152# most of the year and made the MIT semi-finals there. He has had an erratic record the past two years so he could be either 8th or 80th. He has also had persistent injury problems. Narewski has suffered from that same affliction -- wrestling hurt early in the year and then having to recuperate for over a month. Last year he won two matches at this weight at Firestone, and, if healthy, looks to be a state qualifier. Both McKinney and Schonauer dropped to 140# recently and it's difficult to understand their logic. The possibilities at 145# seem much more conducive to state qualification. Incidentally, they drew in their dual meet confrontation. Should they remain down at 140#, Blank gains an important advantage in his quest for state qualification. Competing in kind of the Bermuda Triangle of Ohio wrestling, Blank has solid skills. Culler and Norman (Copley) are other possibilities.

Vcelka is excellent in the top position with a wide assortment of solid leg rides. However, he does not match up well with Genovese on his feet, and is likely to be heavily scored on from that position. The key for him is to get that first takedown and then work the legs to real advantage. Last year he and State champion Sidon engaged in a series of extraordinarily tough battles, one of which he won. Both were state qualifiers, but Sidon took the title and Vcelka was a first-round loser. Now, at least, he has put Sidon behind him by outgrowing him. Henry is at least one respectful step behind Vcelka, but should qualify. The last berth will probably fall to Cartwright, but Alexander, O'Bryan, and Booth (Ballaire) will also be contenders.

Alvarez, the eldest of the Hamilton Twp.'s three varsity brothers, was a district runner-up last year with strong potential for a high place. However, a tough draw and several close losses finally provided a 6th place medal. I expect him to improve upon that standard this year with finalist potential should he draw away from Genovese. He is very strong, but not nearly as mobile as my projected champ. His results this year have not been uniformly good -- getting "stuck" at Bishop Ready by Henry when ahead and a criteria loss to Greenbaum at Hamilton Twp. -- but he has the resiliency to bounce back. Strunk, too, has suffered some defeats, but has plenty of talent, as well. Hurrell has been at 152# most of the year, but with Tomor a fixture there his only hope will be at 145#. He could be a real surprise package. A trio of Miller, Babcock, and Ranft lead a plethora (as Howard Cosell used to say) of contenders for the last spot.

Contenders from the Dayton District will find it tough going at the Cincinnati Gardens. State qualifier Benham, still only a junior, looks like the best of the lot, but lost both his matches at Columbus last year. Wynn is a solid pinner, but may lack the finesses that count for a lot in the state meet while Loper and Dunn lack state experience. Other candidates might be Rice (Kenton Ridge) and Crabtree (Springfield NW).

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CRAIG TOMOR (OAK HARBOR)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Upchurch (Turpin) | 13. McClain (Norwalk) |
| 3. Coontz (Ravenna Southeast) | 14. Mishnick (Olmsted Falls) |
| 4. Cruze (Eaton) | 15. Minnard (Fairfield Union) |
| 5. Rich (Cambridge) | 16. Henessey (Dayton Carroll) |
| 6. Eisenhower (Bellevue) | 17. Hinkle (Jefferson) |
| 7. Muckley (Marlington) | 18. De Yarmon (Buckeye SW) |
| 8. Mullett (Marysville) | 19. Barber (Beaver Local) |
| 9. Zickafoose (Tipp City) | 20. Williamson (Hillsboro) |
| 10. Kang (Rocky River) | 22. Neeld (Springfield NW) |
| 11. Frye (Washington Court House) | 21. Tommas (Perkins) |
| 12. Hayes (Utica) | 23. Duff (New Richmond) |

I think that there is a very real possibility that this title could come down to a two man struggle between the enormously strong Tomor and the exceptionally quick Upchurch. While there are other reasonable candidates in the assembled field, it keeps coming back to strength (exemplified by Tomor) versus quickness (as illustrated by Upchurch). It's a dynamic tension in most sports, but we may have a clear example come late Saturday afternoon in Cincinnati.

My choice, at least this time, is strength, and state qualified Tomor has an abundance of it. Already the winner of three important tourneys, he will be a key cog in Oak Harbor's team championship bid. Already twice a state qualifier he has won only one bout in state competition, but should rectify that this year. One of his toughest roadblocks will be Eisenhower from this same district. Tomor edged him out 5-4 at Oak Harbor. A major problem for Eisenhower will be his lack of tournament experience. He could be an early round upset victim. Mullett has been the best at this weight in the Columbus area and has a solid chance of qualification. Hayes and state qualifier Minnard are also possibilities from that area. Hayes missed a state trip by one point last year, while Minnard could not match his 1988 state qualification experience. A real darkhorse in this competition is McClain, who like Eisenhower, has little experience, but great upset potential. Tommas is a candidate here, as well.

Upchurch leads the best district in terms of depth as Dayton features three possible placers. The quick Upchurch was 4th last year at 145#, giving two-time State champ Yetts a bit of a struggle before losing 13-8. He's a very fine athlete capable of some amazing feats. At the Cincinnati Holiday tourney he tried to make 152# early to meet Robbins. Failing by a pound he bounced up to 171# and beat Division I state qualifier Texter in the first round and was runner-up on criteria to Terwilliger. Cruze was a state qualifier as a sophomore, but missed out last year losing to Upchurch by two points. This season should provide relatively easy qualification, and, surely, state placement possibilities. Zickafoose missed district action last year, but has won at Tiffin and Troy. He should nail down that third qualifying spot. The fourth, however, is wide open with Henessey, Neeld and Duff all potent factors. This will be an exciting district to watch.

Uncharacteristically, the Firestone District looks rather short in talent. State qualifier Coontz returns and he certainly has placement potential, but after that it's pretty much anyone's guess. Muckley won at Wadsworth, but is short on experience. Kang, too, lacks experience, but he was very impressive at Brecksville -- 2nd only to Andrassy. He has been tossing people around all year. What a plus he would be for Rocky River's team hopes. Mishnick, Hinkle, and Barber are other possibilities, but none of them seem more than ordinary journeymen. Perhaps, Maag (Orrville) or Farley (Buckeye) are part of the answer.

There is much the same story at Tri-Valley where no one wrestler truly stands out. Rich has had a solid year and may prove to have state placement potential. He has been a strong place-winner in every tourney. Frye seems to have a boatload of potential, but wrestles a schedule that makes it difficult to determine whether it's been reached. De Yarmon has shown rapid progress and may prove to be a real factor in this area. Williamson and Householder (New Lexington) are other candidates.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARC COFER (WILLARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Shroyer (Indian Lake) | 12. Chaddock (Minerva) |
| 3. Adkins (Bellevue) | 13. Brauning (Roger Bacon) |
| 4. Chism (Watkins Memorial) | 14. Pelfrey (Eaton) |
| 5. Matson (Miami Trace) | 15. Coleman (Martins Ferry) |
| 6. Gibeaut (Union Local) | 16. Webb (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 7. Pellerite (Olmsted Falls) | 17. Dunaway (Goshen) |
| 8. Hall (Louisville) | 18. Wallace (Akron Hoban) |
| 9. Prather (Canfield) | 19. Breeden (Brookside) |
| 10. Palmer (Oak Harbor) | 20. Hicks (Turpin) |
| 11. Bowman (Canal Fulton NW) | 21. Gunn (Warsaw River View) |

This is kind of an upset special since most people will probably favor state place-winner John Shroyer at this weight class. However, Marc Cofer has had the kind of year that strongly suggests that he may have reached the very top level at 160#. Undefeated, he has pinned about 75% of his opponents as the jump from 145# seems to have made him even stronger. At Tiffin he won the Outstanding Wrestler with five falls including a 59 second demolition in the final, while at the Gorman his 11-3 final victory was his closest bout. A quote from rival coach tells it all; "Truly a horse although he doesn't look like much more than a pony -- he pounded everybody at this tourney." Last season he was a beneficiary of the new consolation rule, losing in the first round and then winning four straight for 3rd place. He fell a match short of placement at Columbus.

Adkins is another "goer" out of Lexington and should place as well. State qualifier Chism will also exit from this district in what promises to be a real test for Cofer. Palmer and Webb are two other able contenders here with state qualification credentials. Below this quintet are several other good competitors like Sheets (Licking Valley), Apling (Perkins), and Wilson (Circleville). The way I see it, Cofer and Adkins should make it easily, but Chism, while a good

third choice, is vulnerable to the big upset. After that, it's anybody's guess with the vagaries of the draw a major consideration.

Shroyer has been at 171# all year, but should be at 160# for tourney action. He, too, was at 145# and placed a solid 5th losing only to Yetts and Upchurch. He won the Marion Harding at 171# and then was 2nd at Troy at the same weight. He may well be more physically intimidating than Cofer, but whether he'll match up as well for six hard minutes is more questionable. There is a major drop-off in quality after him with Pelfrey, Brauning, and Dunaway well below his standard. It is quite likely that one, or possibly two, unknowns will garner state berths here.

The Firestone District seems exceptionally weak with little to choose from here. Bowman, Pellerite, Chaddock, Wallace and Breeden were all district qualifiers, but won one bout between them. Prather and Hall didn't even make the District level, but have done well this year. Each has had some level of success this year. For example, Hall won the Wadsworth while Pellerite was runner-up at Kenston and Bowman at North Canton. Prather was runner-up at Solon while Wallace won at Hudson. What it suggests is that there will be close, fierce competition for five spots, but that the end result will have little import in Cincinnati. This will be one time drawing into a Firestone qualifier will be a welcome sight.

The powerful Matson and the solid Gibeaut will lead the Tri-Valley contingent to Cincinnati. Both have placement potential. Coleman is a natural choice for the third spot. He was a state qualifier last year with an overall 18-17-1 record. There is not much behind this trio with the possible exception of Gunn, who could pull a major upset. Fritter (Philo) is way off the pace.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM SCAVUZZO (REVERE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Losie (Oak Harbor) | 13. Paglio (Lake Catholic) |
| 3. Wickham (Meadowbrook) | 14. Wingrove (Vincent Warren) |
| 4. Keenan (Steubenville) | 15. Powers (Canfield) |
| 5. Buzbee (Eaton) | 16. Davis (Logan Elm) |
| 6. Majoy (Warsaw River View) | 17. Bartos (Orange) |
| 7. Kusmits (Canal Fulton NW) | 18. Brady (Valley View) |
| 8. Workman (Vermillion) | 19. McCormick (Shelby) |
| 9. Philips (Norwalk) | 20. Fitzpatrick (Teays Valley) |
| 10. Welsh (Solon) | 21. Castelli (Trinity) |
| 11. Vacchio (Hamilton Twp.) | 22. Schumm (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 12. Smith (New Richmond) | 23. Lorente (Washington Court House) |

Finally, we come to a weight class where the final choice is very evident. Scavuzzo, the last of a number of fine wrestling brothers, has turned out to be the best of all. A state runner-up (by a single point) as a sophomore, he dominated the competition last year while winning his first title. Only Atkins of Olmsted Falls kept it close in both Districts and States losing by three points each time. This year I'm not sure anybody will be even that close as

Scavuzzo has the tools to attack any weakness. He is a nice mixture of physical talent and good technique and he seems destined for a lot of college success as well.

The Firestone District will feature a number of solid performers at this weight, but none should in any way threaten Scavuzzo's dominance. Kusmits and Welsh are good athletes who have had up-and-down type seasons. Neither has won a major tourney, but both have looked good in placing. Welsh, in particular, seems to be making real progress. Paglio, only a junior, will drop to 171# after having good success at 189#. He'll be a top contender next year. Powers and Bartos have done well this year and could grab a low qualifying spot. Castelli, 3rd at the OCC is another possibility. The key here will be to make the semi-final round, thus assuring three opportunities to qualify. The best way to do that is draw away from Scavuzzo. It should be very interesting.

The powerful Losie heads a rather non-descript Lexington District. This year he has already won the MIT, Oak Harbor, and Sandusky St. Mary Tournaments. A state qualifier last year, Losie had a terrible draw and bowed out early. That is not likely to happen again. Workman was a Division I district qualifier last year who has reached an even higher level this year. He has already won the Tiffin and Mackey titles. I think he has strong placement potential. Vacchio was a match from States and ended up as the alternate, but this year he should do better. I wouldn't be surprised to see him at 160#. Philipps and Davis also missed state qualification by one bout -- with Philipps winning their contest for 5th place. That already presents five very qualified wrestlers for four berths -- and there's more. McCormick was 2nd at the Gorman and Marion Harding, while winning at Port Clinton. He can win at the state level -- if he can get there.

The Tri-Valley District is also loaded with high caliber wrestlers aiming for the three qualification spots. Keenan destroyed the competition at both Richmond Hts. and Steubenville and has split two bouts with Division I Hager -- his other loss was to Wickham. He follows in the footsteps of two state champion brothers. Wickham, now with over 100 career victories has been a terror along the River pinning squadrons of people at every tourney. I'm not sure, however, that he will be able to continue that performance at the state level. He was not overly impressive in my single look at him (which is not necessarily a fair sampling of his work). Last year he wrestled only one losing round at Columbus. Majoy, another state qualifier, adds even more depth at this weight. He, too, lasted one round at Columbus. This is a powerful trio -- all of whom will be dangerous at the state meet. Two other possibilities are Wingrove and Lorente, but they are long-shot opportunists here.

State qualifier Buzbee is the principal standout at the Dayton District. A district runner-up last year, he drew Atkins in the first round and then lost his consolation bout 13-12. He should easily place this year. Smith was one bout from Columbus last year and he ranks second in this area. I don't think he'll be a primary threat at the state level, however. Brady and Schumm are shaky third and fourth choices -- each with district experience and solid tournament success this year.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LUKE FICKELL (COLUMBUS DESALES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Smith (Carlisle) | 12. Houseman/Linger (Springfield NW) |
| 3. Durieux (Hebron Lakewood) | 13. Smith (Washington Court House) |
| 4. Hunt (Kenston) | 14. Berecek (Crestwood) |
| 5. Rakoczy (Padua) | 15. Dorn (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 6. Heath (St. Clairsville) | 16. Heath (St. Clairsville) |
| 7. Freitag (Solon) | 17. Cadez (Perkins) |
| 8. Hernandez (Fostoria) | 18. Peters (Claymont) |
| 9. Blackburn (Minerva) | 19. White (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 10. Groves (Big Walnut) | 20. Baughman (Tri-Valley) |
| 11. Weaver (Revere) | 21. Rozmus (Urbana) |

My question last year was whether Luke Fickell would win three or four state titles. The answer is now, clearly, that he will win three. What is interesting is that he beat both 160# state finalists during the year, but freshman inexperience and nerves (something you can't ignore) did him in at the district level. Well, one thing I did get right was that he would grow into a dominating big man and that is certainly true. A marvelously tall and well constructed 189#, he will apparently dominate a none-to-strong field. Next year, it looks like he'll be a 220# heavyweight and that should be an interesting sight, indeed.

Some of Fickell's toughest competition will again be from within his own district. The excellent Durieux was a strong 4th last year at this weight. While he wrestles kind of an undemanding schedule, he should be more than ready at tournament time. Hernandez is the sparkplug of the Fostoria team and a district qualifier last year (Durieux pinned him). In a historical vein it was a Fostoria wrestler that knocked Fickell into the losers bracket last year. Cadez is a hugely promising sophomore who has endured an up-and-down season. He was 5th at Tiffin, but has some impressive dual meet wins. Groves won the Licking Hts., Golden Bear and West Jefferson title, but will be overmatched against the top two here. Thompson (Shelby) and Oliver (Watterson) are other choices.

Dwayne Smith came on very strong at the end of last year with a district runner-up trophy followed by a strong 3rd place finish at Columbus. It was his second trip to Columbus and followed up on the promise of his sophomore year. In fact, it was only an overtime loss in the semis that prevented Smith from vying for the title. This year he won the giant GMVWA tourney and is poised for another high place. State qualifier Houseman has not yet wrestled at this weight and he would certainly claim the second spot in this district. His substitute Linger has done well. Last year he was a district qualifier at heavyweight and got to within one match of Columbus. Donley and Rozmus are two other contenders who look like state material -- and they would claim the last two spots at Dayton. Other possibilities are Jamison (Eaton), Morgan (McNicholas) and Jacobs (Clermont NE).

The Firestone competition will be very close and with substantial team implications. State qualifier Hunt proved to be an exceptional sophomore last year and has improved on that standard this season. He won the North Canton and lost by a point to Division I star Livengood at Kenston. He keeps getting

tougher to beat. Rakoczy was 1st at Avon Lake and a strong placer at both Brecksville and the OCC. He has really blossomed under coach Brian Miluk. The mammoth Freitag is a key cog in Solon's hopes for a team title. Rusty at the Solon where he finished 2nd, he has been sidelined by injury as well. Just back, he lost a 6-4 dual to Hunt. When you look at him you just see "athlete" in every move. Blackburn was the state alternate in this district at 189# last year while recording three falls in the competition. He is extremely dangerous and cannot be overlooked. He was MVP at the Minerva dual, Weaver was second-string 160# at last year's end for Revere, but that has all changed this season. He romped through the Brunswick and has dominated in the duals all season. Certainly, working with Scavuzzo hasn't hurt, and he could be a major factor at tournament time this year. That's five strong qualification candidates, but five other deserve mention. Both Berecek and Dorn wrestle in the tough PCL and have good credentials. Berecek, a district qualifier, was 3rd at Kenston, while Dorn has won a long string of duals. White won two bouts at Districts last season and was 2nd to Division I Livengood at Richmond Hts., but did not place at Brunswick. Nutter (Buckeye) and Simon (Olmsted Falls) would be rated most years, but are stuck in a very deep weight class. Still, Nutter wrestled with a lot of heart at the MIT and may deserve a higher rating.

Heath was in an impossible district last year (both state finalists were there) and had no chance to qualify despite 24 wins. This year he looks twice as big and strong and is dominating Eastern District action. Totally undefeated, he has swept all before him, and should continue to do so until state action. Smith a state qualifier last year, will not match up this year with Heath -- the improvement has been too great. However, he should qualify once more and will be a threat with the right draw. Last year Dwayne Smith T.F.'d him in the first round. Peters and Baughman would seem to be the two prime threats for the last berth. Peters, fourth son of the prolific Uhrichsville family, is now a junior and is coming close to state level performance. One of nine boys, he keeps the family tradition alive of having a varsity wrestler since 1978 and his first name ends in the traditional two "t"s -- Chett.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN WALLIS (PADUA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Waugh (Whitehall) | 13. Hunter (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 3. Miller (West Holmes) | 14. Jenkins (Indian Lake) |
| 4. Webster (Ashtabula Edgewood) | 15. Scianna (Canfield) |
| 5. Woodside (Fairfield Union) | 16. Ayers (Bellaire) |
| 6. Pennington (Eaton) | 17. Zimmerman (Bethel-Tate) |
| 7. Grabarczyk (Swanton) | 18. Sheets (Miami Trace) |
| 8. Dietz (Shelby) | 19. Walsh (Olmsted Falls) |
| 9. Willets (Greenon) | 20. Johnson (Perkins) |
| 10. Bronson (Lake Catholic) | 21. Peaspanen (Conneaut) |
| 11. Porter (Bellefontaine) | 22. Popson (Port Clinton) |
| 12. Casey (Oak Harbor) | 23. Crutcher (Washington Court House) |

In something of an unusual twist, the top two choices at this weight were both Division I wrestlers last year. Wallis, while at Elyria, compiled a marvelous 24-7 record, and only a close 3-1 loss to Riley of St. Ed's prevented him from gaining a state berth. This year he has been invincible winning at Avon Lake (on a fall), at Brecksville (beating Gall, Durr, and Pou) and winning the OCC (over Terebeniec). It already has been a marvelous season, but this consistency of performance promises even greater rewards at tournament time. Waugh was runner-up in his Division I district after missing virtually the entire regular season and wrestled one round at state losing to the selfsame Riley. This year he dominated the Marion Harding and Eastmoor tourneys winning both with falls. If Wallis is alert, Waugh won't be able to grab the quick fall that has become his trademark.

At Firestone, Wallis and state qualifier Webster lead a relatively weak contingent. Webster grabbed the fifth and last qualifying spot in 1989 after losing a semi-final and consolation bout earlier during the day. He lost both bouts in Columbus. This year he has been very successful -- at least as far as I've been able to observe. After this duo, the rest of the weight class is in chaos. I've rated Hunter, the sophomores Bronson and Scianna, Walsh, and Peaspanen. Of this group, Bronson has caught my eye in terms of rapid improvement and another six weeks may thrust him into the third spot. Scianna was 2nd at Solon, but did not show much aggressiveness, and then failed to place at Brunswick. Hunter didn't get out of his sectional last year, but was 3rd at Richmond Hts. and Brunswick. Other possibilities are Houston (Avon Lake), Whitfield (Cleveland Central Catholic) and Eberhardt (Firelands).

Waugh faces much stronger competition. Woodside was a district runner-up, and lost a narrow first-round state battle. He is rated ahead of Waugh by the local papers there. Grabarczyk and Popson are past district qualifiers who have fashioned an uneven record this year. Grabarczyk won five times at the MIT -- losing only to Terebeniec twice to finish 4th. Popson has yet to win a tourney, but has been close to the top in every outing. Dietz has also had reasonable success. The pocket-sized Casey and Johnson are other possibilities here. I think the first two spots will go to Waugh and Woodside, but after that, it's anyone's guess.

Miller should be far and away the class at Tri-Valley. A state qualifier last year, he beat the highly touted Myers to win the Smithville and the OW, as well. If he stays aggressive, he has finalist potential. He has gained close to 30 pounds of muscle since last year. Ayers and Sheets are top candidates for the last two spots, but Crutcher may be a factor. At any rate, the last two qualifiers pose little threat at the state level.

There were all kinds of good heavyweights in the Southwest District last year (although I failed to pick the best one), but they all graduated and the new influx of talent is not as good. I've rated Pennington highest based on a sectional title last year, and impressive tourney results in 1990. Only a junior, he'll be very tough next year. There is again a Jenkins at Indian Lakes, but it's not the state title holder, although this one was a finalist at Marion Harding and Troy. Willets and Porter are my two other qualification choices, but Zimmerman is also rated. Sullivan (Hamilton Ross) is another possibility.

1. Solon -- When I first learned that Solon had dropped to Division II, I immediately conceded them the team title. Now I'm not nearly so sure. Genovese has been solid, but both Schork and Sias have struggled (although they are wrestling up a weight). What may save them is Fritz, Freitag, and Welsh all of whom could score in Cincinnati. To me, the hidden resource could be a healthy Lou Genovese.
2. Oak Harbor -- Tomor and Losie are the two big scorers who could put 40 points on the board. After that they have numerous chances to score with Shanteau, Scherf, Palmer, Frisch, and the Kerstens. If everybody comes through they'll blow away the field, but they'll stay close if only two can help. Coach Bergman's major challenge is to get everybody at the correct weight.
3. St. Paris Graham -- Strictly a four man team, but they are an excellent quartet. Randall, Abbott, and Henderson could all be finalists, and Glover placed last year. The problem is there are no back-ups and Glover hasn't looked good and the 112# field is devastating.
4. Lake Catholic -- The three consecutive middleweights could be awesome if they all are healthy. Mackin and Becks are state qualifiers while Cerar has had an excellent season. Factor in Cwiak, Paglio, and young Bronson and they have a slight chance to repeat. If so, they'll have to wrestle "over their heads," but, then, they did so last year.
5. Padua -- Wallis should win it and heavyweights can score a lot of points. Humphrey is a possible finalist while Rakoczy should score heavily at 189#. After that there is nothing but hopes and those are pretty faint. Perhaps Incorvia is the chance.
6. Twinsburg -- Coach Dave Mariola turns out a great team every year, and this is no exception. Haring is defending state champion, and Zamiska has been a finalist. They could both win. Kitchen should be able to score at 103#, but there is no one else to help.
7. Rocky River -- This is a team that if things go just right could vault forward a few places. Bowers could be a finalist, and both Connelly's are excellent -- although they have not done as well at State as anticipated in the past. The key will be other help and Kang or Hew may be able to provide it.
8. Revere -- Scavuzzo is going to score a lot of points -- enough alone to put them into the top dozen. After that Weaver and Rodriguez need to carry the ball, and the latter, in particular, looks ready. Zabor is another long shot hope.
9. Eaton -- A long-shot choice, but one that I think can be justified. Trunck, Cruze, and Buzbee could all be state placers while Pennington, Pelfrey, and Jamison all have a chance to help. They'll have to do it on depth.

10. Kenston -- Early in the year, they were more like 50th and 10th with only Hunt doing well. Now suddenly Bryant and Santamaria have caught fire and things look somehow different. The question is whether they navigate their way through crowded district fields at their weight.

DIVISION III

The new changes made in Division III have now been tested over two years and must be judged an unqualified success. They promoted exciting competition and crowned state champions from all across the state. No longer could a wrestler become a state champion without enduring four testing bouts against quality competition. While the traditional Division III powers continued to do well, they no longer dominate the competition to the extent that they had in the past.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TIM DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. W. Wright (Bishop Ready) | 12. Raver (Olentangy) |
| 3. Nguyen (Archbold) | 13. Fowler (Waynedale) |
| 4. Wilkovich (Columbia Station) | 14. DeAmicis (Carey) |
| 5. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 15. Nightengale/Sams (Wellsville) |
| 6. Roth (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Allan (Brookfield) |
| 7. Maiani (Sandusky St. Mary) | 17. Breuer (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 8. Klco (Perry) | 18. Hider (West Salem NW) |
| 9. J. Wright (Belpre) | 19. O'Dell (Brookville) |
| 10. Williams (New London) | 20. L. Al-Samkari (Oakwood) |
| 11. Shipman (Cardinal) | 21. Spencer (Edison North) |

The arrival of yet another Dernlan generally spreads consternation through the Division III ranks as each one seems better than the last. After all, Jeff and Steve won two state titles apiece while Matt looks on track for three. This young man, based on his performance so far this year, may top them all by winning his first state crown as a freshman. Look at it another way -- should Tim be as successful as it currently appears, the Dernlan brothers could "max out" with 11 individual titles. Currently the six DiSabato boys have 9 -- with little brother Dominic having two more chances. It's an interesting, if pretty much irrelevant, competition, and I can just see Matt looking to match up with Dominic next year (or vice-versa) in a new form of Family Feud.

Anyway, Dernlan was very solid at the MIT beating two other precocious freshmen, Ford and Allen, to take the title. Terrific conditioning and great mat skills were the telling points in the bouts as he was not quite as sharp on his feet. So far, no one in the Dayton District has given Dernlan a match, but Kosins may have the fire power to make it close. He was runner-up in the giant GMVWA meet, losing only to a Kentucky champion. There is a huge gulf between these two and the rest of the field. O'Dell and Al-Samkari should battle it out for the last spot.

One of Dernlan's stiffest tests will come from the Denison District where state qualifier Wayne Wright leads the way. Last year, substituting for the injured Smiles, he grabbed the third qualifying spot in District action before being knocked out in the first round of States. This year he has placed 1st at St.

John's and 5th at the massive OCC. Another Wright, this one named Jason, is a second top performer who last year won 32 bouts before losing on an injury in his go-to-state match. This year he seems even stronger, although Belpre does not wrestle near the quality schedule as Bishop Ready. I had originally ranked Platt (Licking Hts.), but he continues to wrestle at 119# and it looks less and less like he'll be at this weight. Instead, one of the Wellsville duo of either Sams or Nightengale (they're both good) and Raver will battle for the last two berths. All three were district qualifiers last year. Spencer and Fehn (Bridgeport) look to be shut out here.

The huge Fostoria District sends five qualifiers at every weight class, but at 103# Nguyen stands above the rest. Already a three-time state qualifier, he was 6th last year. He is also only the second 4-time champ at the Findlay "A" classic and the first to win it all four years at the same weight class. His problem at the state level is his apparent unwillingness to wrestle aggressively. For example, his two consolation losses last year were 2-1 and 1-0. He currently has the tools to go after people, but so far hasn't done so. State qualifier Roth is also good as demonstrated by his district runner-up finish and subsequent state qualification. He lost to Maiani by one point early in the year. But it probably won't happen again. Maiani, another freshman prodigy, has already won two OW's this year -- unusual at this weight -- and was 2nd in the Panther Classic and at Marion Harding. He could place. I look for Williams and DeAmicis as the last two qualifiers, but both are vulnerable. Breuer, Boroff, and, possibly, Palm (Gibsonburg) are candidates here.

At Richmond Hts., Wilkovich has had a fabulous year manhandling everyone by enormous scores. I'm not sure as to the quality of his competition, but he has put some impressive numbers on the board in his first varsity season. Behind him, however, the quality quickly erodes and none of the rest appear to have placement potential. In fact, none of the group of Fowler, Klco, Shipman, Allan, and Hider have district experience. Interestingly, no one from this district placed in the top six at States during the past two years -- the only weight class in Division III where this is true. (In fact, this district has had at least one placer in 22 of the 24 other weight classes during this same time period.)

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE MATTIN (DELTA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Gibson (Cadiz) | 13. Lindeman (Bellbrook) |
| 3. Hartman (Wellington) | 14. Lambdin (Black River) |
| 4. Mokros (Shadyside) | 15. S. Hehr (Woodsfield) |
| 5. DePhilipps (Aurora) | 16. Stout (Brookville) |
| 6. Clemens (Lima Central Catholic) | 17. Brown (Edgerton) |
| 7. Lundquest (Marion Pleasant) | 18. Daugherty (Richmond Hts.) |
| 8. Adelsperger (Tiffin Calvert) | 19. Spellman (Olentangy) |
| 9. McCrory (Cardinal Stritch) | 20. Reichert (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 10. Getty (Elyria Catholic) | 21. M. Feckanin (Ledgemont) |
| 11. Amicon (Bishop Ready) | 22. Shinkle (Batavia) |
| 12. Rowland (West Salem NW) | 23. Starrett (Dayton Christian) |

Last year there was no question in my mind by mid-February that Wade Gibson would win the state title. He had lost in the state finals on criteria as a freshmen, and missed by a single point while finishing 3rd as a sophomore. Undefeated as a junior --he had, for example, majored Division II third placer Randall --disaster struck in terms of a serious shoulder injury right before sectionals. Unable to compete, he watched Yinger take the title that seemed to have his name on it. This year I saw his name at 112# once more, and immediately felt I knew who one state champion was going to be. But something has gone awfully wrong here. His scores were unimpressive and then he moved up to 119# and things got worse. First it was a 5th place finish at Licking Hts., and then going from OVAC champ to someone who couldn't place in the top eight there. What has gone wrong? From the perspective of 100 miles one can only guess, but several things seem evident. One, it is likely that he cut too much and too fast in reaching 112# for the first week of the season while, second, the close bouts, while his metabolism adjusted, eroded his confidence. And then the wheels came off. What needs to happen is a regrouping of forces and, perhaps, a slow return to 112# (he doesn't look strong enough for top level competition at 119#). At any rate, I still hope that there is a state title in Wade Gibson's future, but, if not, he still has had a brilliant career.

With Gibson experiencing problems, I've gone back to Mike Mattin as my choice at this weight. A state champion at 103# last year, he has performed in an efficient manner losing only to Gustovich so far this season. He will certainly have more close matches at 112# than he did when winning at 103# last year. His district features some solid performers. McCrory and Clemens were both excellent at the heavily Division I OCC's. Clemens caught McCrory on his back in semis and lost a 13-12 OT thriller in the finals. McCrory came back to get 3rd and I still think he might have a better chance of beating Mattin. State qualifier Adelsperger will also be a factor and should get the fourth qualifying spot. The last berth will be a dogfight between Brown, Reichert, and, perhaps, Walz. A very solid contingent.

If Gibson does not appear at 112# or is still not in top form, there will be some drop-off in quality at Denison. It will also highlight another excellent wrestler who has had a troubled season. Mokros, 2nd in the state as a freshman at 103#, has been gradually working his way down to this classification. He, too, failed to place at the OVAC and was 2nd at Bellaire St. John, but did win the Shadyside Invitational. His style requires him to be, perhaps, a little "bigger" and stronger than his opponent -- and that will be true at 112#. Last year he had five losses going into districts, but swept to that title and lost only in the finals to Mattin (whom he had on his back). State qualifier Lundquest, Amicon, and Spellman are all strong Central District performers who could qualify. However, Hehr, Quinn (Hannibal River), and Blackburn (Licking Hts.) are real possibilities. With only four spots open, the competition will be fierce -- especially if Gibson is ready.

That same crowded field exists at Richmond Hts. where I've rated seven contenders and considered several others. The spunky sophomore Hartman has moved ahead of three state qualifiers with a series of excellent performances including a finalist finish at the MIT. DePhilipps, 6th last year at 112#, has lost to Hartman, but he knows how to win the crucial bout. Getty was 3rd at the MIT and won two matches at last year's districts. Both Rowland and Lambdin were state qualifiers, but may have trouble qualifying this year. Lambdin, in particular, has not been real effective at 119#, but has a history of moving down late in the

season and performing well. Last year he was the district champion utilizing this strategy. Daugherty and M. Feckanin are also good, but may become victims of the numbers game.

At Dayton, something of the same picture emerges. Stout, 5th at 103# last year, has been erratic this year -- winning a big bout then losing two or three. I've listed him below Lindeman in that district. State qualifier Shinkle would appear to have the best shot at the third berth, but does not wrestle a strong schedule. Starrett, who Shinkle beat 3-2 in first round districts, is another possibility.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ETHAN MORAN (VERSAILLES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Smiles (Bishop Ready) | 12. Allan (Brookfield) |
| 3. Soto (Otsego) | 13. Ciacci (Shenendoah) |
| 4. S. Feckanin (Ledgemont) | 14. P. Alavarado (Archbold) |
| 5. Haring (Ontario) | 15. Paul (Chippewa) |
| 6. Donahue (Bellaire St. John) | 16. Price (Tri-Village) |
| 7. Dunstan (Elyria Catholic) | 17. Redd (Woodridge) |
| 8. Hopkins (Delta) | 18. Routson (Van Buren) |
| 9. Kimmet (Delphos St. John) | 19. R. Al-Samkari (Oakwood) |
| 10. Kowatch (West Salem NW) | 20. Gorkos (Canton Central Catholic) |
| 11. Ramsey (Huron) | 21. McKeever (Cadiz) |

This shapes up as a four-way battle featuring some exceptionally high-scoring wrestlers. That could easily translate into a competition that can be expected to generate enormous fan interest. Since each of that top quartet exits from a different district, I will examine each in the context of his own area.

My choice is state runner-up Ethan Moran. Last year he lost but three times -- all to Dernlan -- while consistently performing at a high level. Dernlan beat him by 4 points at Districts and by 3 in the state finals. This year Moran, too, has struggled to find the optimum weight. He has been at 130# and 125# -- finishing 2nd to Abbott at 125# at Graham and 2nd to Dernlan at Wayne (losing 19-3). It looks like a state crown is possible only at 119#. Once settled at that weight, he should be most formidable. His district field is very weak, which should give him extra preparation time, and is headed by Price, Al-Samkari, and Lapinski (Brookville).

Smiles has wrestled the toughest schedule and done very well winning two major titles. Even his 5th at the OCC's was impressive considering the quality present at that weight class. Terrific on his feet, he matches up well with everyone and if Moran is not very, very sharp, Smiles will win it all. His district is the most crowded. Donahue was 3rd last year at 103# and his leg rides are very good. He'll be hurt, however, on his feet where he doesn't compare with a Smiles or Soto. If Gibson should compete here and be at last year's level, he could change this entire analysis. If not, state qualifier Ciacci is a solid third choice with the last berth wide open. Possibilities include McKeever, Forrider (North Union), and Garver (West Jefferson).

Soto was 3rd last year at 112# losing only to Feckanin in the quarter-finals.

Even then, I didn't feel his exceptional takedown skills were being sufficiently utilized as he spent too much time in non-scoring riding. This year he has been even better winning consistently against big school competition. He should be a pivotal force at this weight. State qualifiers Haring, Hopkins, and Kimmet form a strong trio behind Soto. All should qualify and they will match up well with everyone except my top quartet. The fifth spot is wide open with Ramsey, Alavarado, Routson, and Henly as strong contenders. Again, this will be a very fine competition at Fostoria.

State runner-up Feckanin heads the Richmond Hts. qualifiers and he really demonstrated his skills as a freshman at last year's district and state meets. In Columbus he won his first three bouts by a combined 31-11 score at 112# before succumbing to the senior, Yinger. This year he lost a high scoring 12-9 battle to Smiles. I've placed Dunstan -- who missed state qualification by one point last year -- ahead of state qualifiers Kowatch, Allan, and Redd. In addition, Paul has had a fine season in the Wooster area while Gorkos plugs along for a poor team. Last year Feckanin defeated him 2-0 at districts. This group should provide four very solid performers for the state meet. It's a quartet that will be strong from top to bottom.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MATT DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Kruse (Bishop Ready) | 13. Dilger (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 3. Peters (Beachwood) | 14. Kettler (Chippewa) |
| 4. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 15. Appleton (Oakwood) |
| 5. Lippert (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Worst (Carey) |
| 6. Behrens (Hawken) | 17. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 7. Barnes (Otsego) | 18. Kale (Liberty) |
| 8. Huber (Elyria Open Door) | 19. Kramer (Delphos St. John) |
| 9. Johnson (West Salem NW) | 20. Moritz (Brookville) |
| 10. Torzok (Perry) | 21. Stuller (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 11. Hengsteler (Arcadia) | 22. Johnson (Jonathan Alder) |
| 12. Case (Cadiz) | 23. Dean (Wellington) |

Defending state champion Matt Dernlan is an overwhelming favorite at this weight class and will dominate the state meet from the first round to the last. He is just so well-trained and superbly conditioned that he could only be challenged by a select few wrestlers from around the State -- none of whom happen to attend Division III high schools. The battle at this weight will be for second place -- a key element, of which will be drawing away from Dernlan.

Actually, one of Dernlan's strongest competitors will come from his own district. Kosins has won three major tournaments defeating a number of excellent Division I and II foes. Particularly noteworthy was his first place finish as GMVWA. Last year he qualified at the Division II level losing to my current Division II pick at this weight, Matt McCoy. The third spot will be a battle between two returning state qualifiers with Appleton my choice over Moritz. Either one will

have trouble at the state level again this year.

Kruse really dominates the Denison District, in much the same manner Dernlan will dominate the state meet. In fact, I've had some serious problems coming up with more names to complete the state roster from this area. I've listed the rapidly improving sophomore Case, the experienced Hanes, and Hamilton Twp. champ Johnson. I'm sure there are other potentials here, but the only other prospect I could locate is Johnson (Olentangy). Outside of Kruse, this is a group you'll want to draw into.

The excellent sophomore Peters gets better and better. Last year he lost the district title by a single point to Behrens, but then lost a tough first round bout to two-time state place winner Long. While he doesn't dominate this district in the same manner as Kruse at Denison, the principal reason for that is the much higher level of competition at Richmond Hts. Two-time state qualifier Behrens beat Peters by a point for the district title last year, but duplicating that result may be nearly impossible now. Behrens, however, should capture his first state victories this year. State qualifier Huber defeated Johnson earlier this year, but must remain healthy to qualify. Last year he showed excellent defensive skills as he won a number of low scoring bouts.

Even the always overcrowded Fostoria District does not showcase a large number of outstanding placement candidates. Lippert is a former state qualifier (as a freshman last year) and he ended up a strong 4th losing only to Dernlan and two-time state champ Zapadka. It was an impressive performance made all the more so by his relative inexperience. This year he has won the Clyde, Mackey, and Fremont St. Joe tourneys. He could beat anyone here but Dernlan (it was 13-8 in last year's quarter-finals). Worst is the only other state qualifier here (at 103#) and he lost both bouts at Columbus. In addition, he has been injured the entire season and expects to come back at this weight. Under the circumstances (up three weight classes and injured all year), qualification this time will be a real feat. Instead, Barnes and Hengsteler are both solid candidates with good credentials. Barnes, in particular, has shown real improvement. Hengsteler was injured in last year's districts, and has bounced back this year with two tourney wins including the "A" classic. Dilger, Kramer, and Stuller are other possibilities, but they are not that much better than a number of other candidates. I did, however, like what I saw of Kramer.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DOMINIC DiSABATO (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Miller (Sidney Lehman) | 12. Genovese (Woodridge) |
| 3. Hoffman (Liberty Center) | 13. Butsko (New Albany) |
| 4. Unkefer (Waynedale) | 14. Tuttle (Springfield NE) |
| 5. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) | 15. DeTray (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 6. Broud (Wellington) | 16. Witherite (Richmond Hts.) |
| 7. A. Alvarado (Archbold) | 17. Saho (Cadiz) |
| 8. Howard (Licking Hts.) | 18. P. Seim (Oakwood) |
| 9. Lavender (Casstown Miami East) | 19. Miesle (Woodmore) |
| 10. Mullins (West Jefferson) | 20. Lucic (Wickliffe) |
| 11. Brookes (Seneca East) | 21. Brem (Steubenville Central Cath.) |

There are basically two stories at this weight class. One is the continuing saga of the DiSabato family and their never ending success at state meets while the other revolves around the reasonably rare clash of two defending state champions. As mentioned at 103#, the DiSabato clan (Dominic is brother number six) has won nine state crowns and, along with the Hansons from Richmond Hts., hold the state mark for titles by a set of brothers. Dominic is in the mold of the others in that he is very sharp on his feet, and can utilize that skill to mentally "break" his opponent. The one difference he endures, as must all youngest children, is the constant, well-meaning advice from his brothers during close bouts. He won the giant OCC title this year, but ironically lost two smaller ones -- a 4-3 defeat by Division II choice, McCoy, at Bishop Ready and a 7-5 loss to another Division II choice, McCumber, at St. Johns.

His main competition is the excellent Miller who surprised the field by winning at this weight last year -- surviving three very close bouts including a 4-3 finale. Initially, I felt that DiSabato would dominate their meeting with takedowns much in the manner his brother Adam did two years ago in defeating the excellent Case. However, Miller may not go that easily based on his narrow 13-9 loss to Kimble -- one of the two best at this weight in Division I. When examined closely, his record this year looks quite impressive and he has, clearly, improved over his championship season. If Miller remains competitive on his feet with DiSabato, it could be close -- although title #10 seems a reasonably sure thing.

DiSabato completely dominates the Denison District which has a definite Columbus slant to it. In fact, all four qualifying berths could go to the Central District with Howard, Mullins, and Butsko joining DiSabato. This would be a strong quartet. Eastern District contenders seem limited to Saho and Brem -- neither of whom has much post-season experience. Both have had to battle injuries recently as well.

Miller will also dominate his district, although state qualifier Lavender should be at this weight. Up from 112#, he won 32 bouts last year before a narrow first round loss eliminated him at Columbus. He won at Troy. Tuttle and Seim will battle for the last berth, but they are well behind Miller. Seim, for example,

was a 13 point victim at Springfield Catholic. Tuttle is a solid Division III performer who would like to reach the States once during his high school career.

Hoffman heads what is apparently a mediocre field at Fostoria. A district runner-up last season, he was T.F.'d by Kot in the first round in less than four minutes. This year he was impressive at the "A" Classic and is basically all that remains from the proud Liberty Center teams of the past few years. Only a junior, he will be Liberty Center's big hope next year to capture that school's first individual state crown. Tyson has won three tournament titles this year and stands second in this region. Last year he was an early district loser. Adrian Alvarado has been at 135# all year, but will move down when Archbold cuts to fit Jernigan in at 145#. He won the "A" Classic at the higher weight and will be a stiff challenge for Tyson, but probably not Huffman. Brookes was a strong 2nd at Marion Harding losing only to Division I Fetter in the finals. He is the marginal fourth choice at Fostoria. DeTray and Miesle were both crushed by Hoffman at the "A" Classic, but may well battle for the last state berth.

Unkefer heads a not-too-strong Richmond Hts. District and the best chance there for a place. He was 2nd at the MIT's weakest weight class and won at Smithville. Last year it was "two and out" for him at the district level. Broud was a solid performer at 135# last year winning two bouts at the district level. This year he was 4th at the MIT and won at Black River over state qualifier Kowatch. He could be a placement factor either here or at 135# if he switches weight classes with Dean Wright. State qualifier Genovese has competed at 135# and 130# -- a fairly major jump from his 103# days of last year. I keep looking for him to go down, but with Redd and Paden below him, there may not be room. At any rate, he has been a solid performer at this higher weight and his previous experience has to be a real plus. I've also ranked Witherite and Lucic, but they may not be any more likely to gain that last spot than Bolanz (Waterloo) or Soppitt (Perry).

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MONTE OHL (ONTARIO)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Foston (Bridgeport) | 13. Wellmeier (Lima Central Catholic) |
| 3. D. Wright (Wellington) | 14. Weyrick (Bellaire St. John) |
| 4. Biddle (Kansas Lakota) | 15. Heil (Brooklyn) |
| 5. Reber (Waynedale) | 16. Orrick (Edgerton) |
| 6. Crytzer (Richmond Hts.) | 17. Hanood (Tusky Valley) |
| 7. Conry (Sandusky St. Mary) | 18. Burdine (Archbold) |
| 8. Kantor (Oakwood) | 19. Bergman (Versailles) |
| 9. Mazey (Chanel) | 19. Fenselon (Cardinal) |
| 10. Carney (Licking Hts.) | 21. Goodman (New London) |
| 11. Wesbecher (Sidney Lehman) | 22. Shocklee (Akron St. Vincent) |
| 12. Boyer (West Jefferson) | 23. Janusz (Grandview Hts.) |

For some reason there seems to be a general lack of good 135# around the state. It's the weakest weight class in Division I and is not very strong in Division III either. Only in the middle school classification do we see a high competitive level. Last year I chose Monte Ohl as champion at 130# despite a

serious mid-season injury, and the pressure of that top rating prevented him from performing at his usual high level in Columbus. Still, he was a quarter-finalist losing a narrow decision to Foston -- likely once again to be his most persistent rival. Healthy once more, the state runner-up of two years ago has competed as high as 152#, although weighing in at little more than 140#. He was the OW at the Gorman, defeating two-time Division I state qualifier Bob Andy. This year, I believe, will be a vindication for him along the tournament trail.

Only state qualifiers Biddle and Conry appear to have the talent to challenge Ohl at Fostoria. Biddle, winner of three tournaments this year, has the talent and experience to perform well in pressure situations. However, I believe Ohl will suffocate him with his riding ability when they meet. Conry has also won three titles including a strong performance at the Panther Classic where he recently overwhelmed Shanteau. Also a winner at Marion Harding and Edison, his only tournament loss was a 11-10 squeaker to Biddle in early season action. Somewhat below this trio are a host of solid contenders. Wellmeier was one bout from state in 1989 and looked good in the early rounds of the OCC. Orrick won two district bouts last year and was the "A" Classic runner-up. Wellmeier beat him 11-2 at Fostoria last year, however. Burdine and Goodman have been at 140#, but will be contenders as well. Swartzmiller (Hopewell-Loudon) is also solid.

Foston was a district champ last year and grabbed a fourth spot overall. He is already a two-time state qualifier who continues to show improvement. A younger brother, he benefits from the expertise of older siblings. He beat Ohl last year and could do so again. He has lost three times -- all to Division II champ Sidon. Carney and Boyer lead the Central District brigade and both are returning state qualifiers -- although neither one has won a bout at Columbus. At Licking Hts., Carney won their bout on criteria. Weyrick has the best shot at the fourth spot, but Hanood will try to match his brother's performance last year when he qualified at this weight. Janusz and Rinehard (Northmor) are two other possibilities.

Wellington burst onto the scene last year with a great squad of underclassmen -- who have shown additional improvement this season. Dean Wright, one of the junior twins, helped fuel this resurgence and stands poised to help them in their quest for a high team placement. Last year he placed 4th at this district at 119# and drew two-time champ Zapadka in the first round. He gave him a great bout before losing 12-7. This year he won at Buckeye and Black River, but lost to Fritz and Knaze at the MIT and failed to place. Reber is another state qualifier (he beat Dean's twin brother for 3rd at districts), and then lost a criteria decision to Ohl in Columbus. Both he and Wright will challenge for top places. Crytzer is a third strong performer at this weight, although he has never quite reached the level anticipated early on. Last year, in a real shocker, he didn't get out of his sectional. Mazey, another state qualifier, recently dropped from 140# and could be rugged at this new weight. He was a district finalist last year after beating two-time state champ Neikirk in the semi-finals. Kline, Heil, and Fenselon are other possibilities.

State qualifiers Kantor and Wesbecher head the Dayton District, but they do not match up well with the top boys. Both were crushed in state action last year. The third berth is wide open with Bergman and Spiller (Reading) as potential choices. This group will struggle at Cincinnati Gardens.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: REX FROHNAPFEL (BRIDGEPORT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. H. Wright (Wellington) | 13. Castle (Bishop Ready) |
| 3. Beidelschies (Hopewell-Loudon) | 14. Spencer (Genoa) |
| 4. Demorest (Edgerton) | 15. Proffitt (Williamsburg) |
| 5. Ribar (Fenwick) | 16. Miracle (Sidney Lehman) |
| 6. Swint (Fremont St. Joseph) | 17. Ellis (Columbus Academy) |
| 7. Rismiller (Versailles) | 18. Langdon (Oakwood) |
| 8. Roth (Bellaire St. John) | 19. Snyder (Sandy Valley) |
| 9. Lukasik (Aurora) | 20. Sams (Wellsville) |
| 10. Merillat (Archbold) | 21. Kagy (Blufton) |
| 11. Sobas (North Union) | 22. Baird (Coventry) |
| 12. Fow (Chagrin Falls) | 23. Brumbaugh (North Baltimore) |

Rex Frohnafel's four year varsity career spans the second great outburst of Bridgeport wrestling including a team title during his sophomore season. Three times a state place winner, he has been teammates with the Burks, Vargo, and Burlenski, but has never made the finals himself. This year I expect him to dominate a relatively weak weight class and bring home a coveted state crown. Part of his past problem has been a rapid growth rate (he was at 112# two years ago), which has generally put him at a strength disadvantage. That should not be a problem this year. He did take state titlist DiSabato into overtime at the District finals, but then lost to Neikirk and Merryman in Columbus on his way to 5th place. He will join Dean Burk as 4-time placers at Bridgeport.

Frohnafel's district should not be a severe challenge with Roth, Sobas, Castle, Ellis and Sams as qualification possibilities. None of this group will challenge. Roth, an OVAC finalist, was a winner at Shadyside, but has already lost to Foston -- Bridgeport's 135#. Castle is the most interesting Central District candidate, especially since he could play a vital role in Ready's team aspirations. Sams was undefeated going into the OVAC, but looks a little small.

Homer Wright was a very strong 3rd at the MIT -- losing only to Division II choice, Woods. He has won at Buckeye and Black River and looks like the best at Richmond Hts. State placer Furko beat him by just two points in Columbus. Now that Mazey has dropped to 135#, the rest of the field looks a quantum jump below Wright. Wright beat Lukasik 14-7 at the MIT and would dominate Snyder and Fow. Along with Baird, Kailburn (Perry) and Conte (Cuyahoga Hts.) are long shots. Only Wright has placement chances here.

State qualifiers Beidelschies and the fast improving Demorest head the Fostoria area. Beidelschies nailed down a district third last year, but then lost immediately in Columbus. He nipped Demorest 6-5 in the "A" Classic finals, as that wrestler has made great strides this season. Swint, also a state qualifier is still up two weight classes after dropping from 145#. He won the Panther Classic there. There is a major quality drop-off after this trio. Merillat, though, may be a surprise after dropping to 140# and was a district qualifier last season. He benefits from having the many fine Archbold middleweights as workout partners. I've listed Spencer, Eisel, and Brumbaugh, but those are just

guesses. Kagy (Blufton) has wrestled some intriguing bouts and should be considered.

Ribar and Rismiller, both state qualifiers, lead a competitive group at Dayton. Both have placement opportunities, although neither won a bout at States last year. The rest of the field will vie for but one opening. State alternate Proffitt seems the obvious choice -- Ribar beat him 9-4 for 3rd. However, Miracle and Langdon could play a role as well.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM NYE (EDGERTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Jernigan (Archbold) | 13. Krivak (Columbia Station) |
| 3. Stasiulewicz (Toronto) | 14. Modra (Hannibal River) |
| 4. D. Jones (Cadiz) | 15. Siesel (Seneca East) |
| 5. Greenbaum (Jonathan Alder) | 16. Reisinger (Black River) |
| 6. Schaeffer (Brookville) | 17. Kucia (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 7. Durbin (Chagrin Falls) | 18. Miller (Stryker) |
| 8. Scott (Sandusky St. Mary) | 19. Bright (Dixie) |
| 9. Ramsey (Licking Hts.) | 20. Kelley (Bishop Ready) |
| 10. M. Seim (Oakwood) | 21. McDaniel (West Liberty Salem) |
| 11. Paxton (Sandy Valley) | 22. Price (Tuslaw) |
| 12. Estep (Wauseon) | 23. Balwanz (Bellair St. John) |

This is a broadly based weight with good wrestlers from every part of the state forming an interest mix of styles and body types. There is also no one that could be identified as even a moderate favorite among that group, so the competition will be intense. In addition, there is a solid of former state qualifiers which guarantees high quality performance.

My choice -- but it certainly is by the narrowest of margins -- is Tom Nye, last year's 5th place finisher from Edgerton. Last year he was district runner-up, but drew eventual champ Campolieti in the first round and lost on Criteria #9 in overtime. He missed the first month of this season, but began his new year by crushing everyone at the "A" classic. He has a smooth flowing style that scores and scores. Right behind him is two-time state qualifier Jernigan whose recent activities have paralleled those of Nye. He was 3rd at Fostoria last year, but defaulted in the first round of States and did not place. This year he missed the first six weeks of action -- and has returned for one dual at 152#. He is very good. Nye beat him 10-8 in the sectional finals last year. Rod Scott, as a sophomore last year, made the district semis before losing dramatic 8-7 and 9-7 decisions. He came to get 5th and the last qualifying spot 2-1. At Columbus he drew into Adkins, was quickly pinned, and then beat Ramsey for his only win -- and 6th place. This year he has been a little erratic, but he still has fine overall potential. There is a huge dividing line between this group and remainder of the field. I've listed Estep, Siesel, and Miller, but the last two spots are wide open. Two other candidates are Files (Cardinal Stritch) and Villareal (Gibsonburg).

At Denison there are four outstanding wrestlers -- three of whom are previous state qualifiers. Stasiulewicz, 6th last year to Nye, is undecided between this weight and 152# and it will be a tough decision. A district finalist last year, he lost a one-point match in the state semi-finals to Wohleber and an OT bout to Shepherd before being hammered by Nye. Basically he was a takedown from a possible state title. Don Jones upset Vcelka for the OVAC crown and retained his unbeaten season. Last year at 152# he was outmuscled, in overtime, in the district quarter-finals. Ramsey was a district runner-up last year, and won a bout at States. He has not wrestled that well in 1990, finishing, for example, 6th at Licking Hts. in a tournament Jones won. Greenbaum, on the other hand, has had several epic struggles with Alvarez and could be the champ at this district. Modra, Kelley, and Balwanz are, at best, distant possibilities here.

Durbins leads a substantially weaker contingent from Richmond Hts. to the Cincinnati Gardens this year. A district runner-up, he lost his first match in Columbus and was eliminated. This year he was 2nd in overtime to the excellent Division I, Jackson, at Richmond Hts. Holiday Tourney and 1st at Chagrin Falls. State qualifier Windom (Waynedale) would be a potent force at this weight, but has not competed all year. It seems unlikely, in fact, that he will wrestle at all in 1990. Paxton was one bout from States last year, but he is behind Durbin. Reisinger, Kucia, Krivak, and Price are all candidates for the last two spots.

Schaeffer has been terrific in the Southwest District. He pinned in the finals at both Troy and Fairfield and has been thrashing all comers. He looks to be a sure qualifier this year. Seim, Bright, McDaniel, and Fribourg (Batavia) will engage in a heated struggle for the last two berths. Whatever the outcome, it won't mean much at the state level.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHAD MARTZ (ARCHBOLD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Desberg (Chagrin Falls) | 12. Blubaugh (Clear Fork) |
| 3. J. Jones (Cadiz) | 13. Hammond (Perry) |
| 4. Shepherd (Shadyside) | 14. Mihuc (Edgerton) |
| 5. Evans (Elmwood) | 15. Packard (Belpre) |
| 6. Fisher (Bellbrook) | 16. Bergman (Versailles) |
| 7. Marquis (Northwood) | 17. Cooper (Kansas Lakota) |
| 8. Hummel (Brookville) | 18. Crowe (Sandy Valley) |
| 9. Hartel (Waynedale) | 19. Wyse (Stryker) |
| 10. K. Rose (Hannibal River) | 20. DeGenova (Bellaire St. John) |
| 11. Fitzwater (Coventry) | 21. Slone (Jonathan Alder) |

During the past decade, Chuck Forward has quietly built Archbold into a perennial wrestling power in the Northwest District. Year after year, he produces a high quality team and outstanding individuals. One major goal he has not reached, however, is an individual state championship -- losing seven consecutive times in the finals Saturday night. This would appear to be the year when that obstacle is breached in the form of two-time state qualifier Chad Martz. He, too, has a negative streak at States losing all three appearances. Clearly, this

combination of negatives doesn't immediately compute to a sure state title, but Martz has to be rated at the top of a reasonably formidable field.

A major challenge for Martz will be junior Shad Evans -- who qualified last year as a 10th grader. This year he was impressive at the MIT, losing close matches to the excellent Turner (Division I) and Ryan (Division II). Last year Jernigan pinned him at 145#, however, and Martz should be able to beat him as well. State qualifier Marquis was also pinned by Jernigan at districts, but wrestled well otherwise giving Nye a real battle. Now at 152#, he has performed well, but suffers from a lack of good talent in the practice room. Blubaugh, only a sophomore, emerged with a brilliant performance at the Gorman beating the top three seeds on his way to the title. Mihuc, Cooper, and Wyse are all experienced performers battle-hardened by the tough competition in their area. They will not be defeated easily, anywhere.

Desberg is a punishing performer who won two bouts in Columbus last year on defaults while finishing a strong 3rd in that competition. He will test Martz to the utmost in what he hopes will be a bruising, physical battle. He has already won the Richmond Hts. Holiday and Chagrin Falls tournaments and will likely be unchallenged until the state tourney. Hartel, also a 1989 qualifier, lost a tough 8-7 battle to two-time state placer Loftis in the first round. He has loads of talent, but doesn't always show it off to best advantage. In the MIT final, he was disqualified for passivity and was decked in the Smithville finals. Fritzwater was a strong second at Wadsworth, but lacks district experience. I don't think he'll need it to get to Cincinnati. Hammond and Crowe look the best shots for the last berth, but there is a good chance that a relative unknown will capture it.

The Denison District is rugged and unbalanced, this time in the direction of the Eastern District. There is fierce competition at this weight along the river and if Stasiulewicz opts to go this way, it will become even more difficult. Right now Jones, undefeated and the OVAC champ, leads the way. A state qualifier at 160# last year, he finished 6th in Columbus despite injury problems. Now at 152#, he has been dominating at times. Shepherd finished 4th in the State at 145#, including a crucial overtime win against Stasiulewicz. He has lost four times already this year, but clearly has already shown what he can do. Rose missed qualification by a single point in the district semis, but has continued to improve this year. He has lost one to Jones and DeYarmon. Packard was injured and missed district competition last year, but could be a factor this year. A wrestler to watch is DeGenova, who has made substantial improvement recently. He has placed in every tournament entered this year. Slone leads a very weak Central District crew, that will have to battle for even one state ticket here. Slone and Carpenter (Pleasant) are their best hopes.

Fisher and state qualifier Hummel lead a solid Southwest District, although they may not be used to the physical style they'll see from the other districts. The third spot could fall to Seim (Oakwood), who I listed at 145#, or perhaps Bergman. After the top pair, the quality will probably be suspect.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JAKE HOSTETLER (WAYNE DALE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 2. Kitchen (Otsego) | 13. Rice (Black River) |
| 3. Loftis (Springfield Central) | 14. Walters (Northmor) |
| 4. Sefert (Beallsville) | 15. Orazen (Chagrin Falls) |
| 5. DiFranco (Ledgemont) | 16. Harrington (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 6. Warnement (Tiffin Calvert) | 17. Dickerson (Springfield NE) |
| 7. Haughn (North Union) | 18. Short (Archbold) |
| 8. Stacklin (Seneca East) | 19. Rocchi (Cadiz) |
| 9. Theis (Mohawk) | 20. Klaber (Fenwick) |
| 10. Nye (Clear Fork) | 21. Kilmartin (Steubenville Cent. Cath.) |
| 11. C. Rose (Hannibal River) | 22. Mapes (Berkshire) |
| 12. Nebergal (Hillsdale) | 23. Voltz (Sandusky St. Mary) |

The last three champions at this weight class (Soehnlén, Smith, and Burlenski) were all 2nd place finishers the year before. That makes Jake Hostetler a natural choice in 1990 as he finished behind Emil Soehnlén 12-7 in last year's final. Hostetler never seems to reach peak efficiency until tournament time, but then he goes all out. As a sophomore, he was 6th at this weight while last year he was 3rd in the District, but 2nd overall. So far this season, he has won at Smithville and finished 2nd to the awesome Mollica at the MIT. He showed some nice takedown technique in that tournament and wrestled with steady intelligence as well.

Hostetler beat DiFranco in overtime for 3rd place last year at Districts, and that looks to be the primary confrontation once again. In fact, DiFranco had bad overtime luck in Columbus as well, losing a 12-10 OT battle to eventual 4th placer Sefert (more about later) in the quarter-finals. While Hostetler is cool, DiFranco can be very emotional, but he is a two-time state qualifier and a past district champ. Nobody else at Richmond Hts. matches up well with this pair so that the rush for the last two spots will almost look like a different competition. Nebergal has been at 171# some of this year, but should be at this weight where he won two bouts at districts last year. Rice has dominated a series of smaller tournaments this year, and I may have placed him too low. He lost an OT battle to Hartel last year late in district action and was eliminated. The challengers will be two rugged competitors from nearby locales who met in the first round of the District last year. Orazen won on a fall over Mapes, but was, himself, eliminated several rounds later. He, too, seems to be much improved, and along with Rice, should make the trip to Cincinnati with the top duo.

Kitchen was a strong 3rd at Fostoria last year, but lost his only state bout. This year he has already won at three tournaments, and has only been challenged when at 171#. He leads a deep and talented district. Warnement and Theis battled for the last qualification spot last year with Theis winning. In fact, Warnement has been the alternate at his weight class the past two years. However, I think Warnement, out much of the season, has moved ahead in their individual battle. He was 1st at the "A" Classic and a semi-finalist at the OCC. Stacklin is another state qualifier who has bounced around in weight; perhaps, having more success at 171#. Last year he missed state placement by a single

point with a 4-3 loss to Loftis. Nye is just down from 171# and will be a potent force here, and should qualify. Harrington and Short are early favorites to challenge Nye for that fifth qualifying berth, but Voltz (Sandusky St. Mary) will be heard from in that contest.

Two-time state placer Loftis towers over an otherwise weak field at Dayton. Very powerful, he does not match up well technique-wise with some of the top boys. Nonetheless, he is such a good athlete that he will be a stern threat. Dickerson and Klaber are my next two choices, but neither will be a factor at States.

Again at Denison fierce competition will be the order of the day. Last year Sefert was knocked off in the district semi-finals, but came racing back to cop a 3rd in that tourney, and then avenged that loss on his to a strong 4th at Columbus. This year he remained undefeated including three important tournament championships -- most notably the OVAC. State qualifiers Haughn and Rose back up Sefert and have lots of experience. Sefert has a clear advantage over each, while Haughn has defeated Rose. Haughn grabbed a 6th place in Columbus losing to Loftis in that round. Rocchi may be a factor here, but he'll have to battle Walters and the improving Kilmartin (Steubenville Central Catholic). Springer (Bridgeport) is another possibility.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TROY SINTOBIN (DELTA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2. Genson (Otsego) | 12. Gresser (Wauseon) |
| 3. Bailey (Brookville) | 13. Swinehart (Waynedale) |
| 4. Heidenbrand (Hillsdale) | 14. White (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. Williams (Sherwood Fairview) | 15. Williams (Steubenville Cent. Cath.) |
| 6. Hartlieb (Bellaire St. John) | 16. Westrick (Tinora) |
| 7. Hennis (Cadiz) | 17. Bowling (Sandy Valley) |
| 8. Bake (Jewett-Scio) | 18. Monnin (Versailles) |
| 9. Lloyd (Ayersville) | 19. Meade (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 10. Schober (Avon) | 20. Monnett (Oakwood) |
| 11. Cochrane (Springfield NE) | 21. Steffen (Mapleton) |

Every year I pick a different Sintobin, and, so far, it's worked out about half the time. In 1988 it was Todd who stumbled in the quarter-finals, and in 1989 it was cousin Rob who crushed everyone with four straight falls and is now doing damage at Clarion. This year it's Todd's younger brother Troy who carries the Sintobin banner this year. It's really a compromise choice, because no one stands out in this field. Sintobin was 3rd last year at 152# after finishing 2nd in his district behind Stacklin. In Columbus he mowed down everyone -- except the invincible Moran -- finishing off the consolation round with 13-4 and 8-3 wins. Basically, a weight lifter gone good, he cuts little weight and thus will be on the smallish side for this competition. On the other hand, he is very mobile and exceptionally determined.

Genson, an Otsego move-in, will be a stern challenge. He won at both Sylvania Southview and Evergreen and has improved from his daily battles with Kitchen.

State qualifier Williams lost two bouts at Columbus last year, but is back this year with an excellent record. He won at Wayne Trace and was 2nd by a point to Kitchen at Evergreen. There are, perhaps, a dozen other potential state qualifiers for the last two tickets to Cincinnati. I've listed "A" Classic champ Lloyd, Rogers champ Gresser and Stryker runner-up (to Lloyd) Westrick. Three other candidates that should be mentioned are Clouse (Mohawk), Medaugh (Stryker), and Baumgartner (Carey). This will be a fierce competition.

State qualifier Bailey leads the southwestern contingent and he has already markedly improved on last year's fine season. He won the huge Division I dominated GMVWA and followed that up with wins at Troy (over the highly rated Shroyer) and Fairfield. He would certainly qualify at any of the three classifications from that area. Cochrane is one full level below Bailey, while Monnin and Monnett are more like two or three paces behind. Only Bailey has state placement hopes here.

The Richmond Hts. District is in total disarray. Heidenbrand, a state qualifier last year, looks best but has wrestled mainly at 189#. At Columbus last year he was outscored 30-7 in his two bouts. After that, things get really hazy. Bowling won two district bouts last year and has generally done well this year. However, he was upset several times by lesser known competitors. I rated him high on experience. Schober has had some big wins, but has little tourney experience. I rated him high on potential. Swinehart has a constant history of reliability, and not throwing away victories. I rated him high on steadiness. Unfortunately, none of them are likely to win a lot on just one dimension of talent. Look for Schober, if anyone, to be a surprise here. Brooks (Tuslaw) may sneak in for a qualifying spot as well.

Once more, the competition will be very spirited at Denison. Hartlieb impressed me at the OVAC coming from way back to almost upset the unbeaten Wickham. Last year he was eliminated early in his district, this year he is 21-3. Hennis and Bake battled to a 13-12 stand-off which Hennis won. Bake is a pinner who likes to throw people around while Hennis is a little more contained. He was runner-up at Licking Hts., but did not place at the OVAC losing early and often. White is the Central District flag bearer at this weight, but was only 5th at Licking Hts. It looks like the Eastern District could dominate here. Williams may be another Eastern competitor who could qualify, while Betz (Madison Plains) is a long shot.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRETT BORN (PERRY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Reynolds (Shadyside) | 13. Hickman (Greeneview) |
| 3. Masters (Bellbrook) | 14. Seyer (Cardinal) |
| 4. Wasiniak (Norwalk St. Paul) | 15. Arbogast (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 5. McGee (Ledgemont) | 16. Davis (Grandview Hts.) |
| 6. Scally (Sandusky St. Mary) | 17. McGrath (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 7. Klima (Huron) | 18. Metzger (Olentangy) |
| 8. Howell (Tri-Valley) | 19. Wannemacher (Delphos St. John) |
| 9. Tolson (Waterford) | 20. Plum (Brooklyn) |
| 10. Partee (Ayersville) | 21. Cramer (Oakwood) |
| 11. Haegele (Licking Hts.) | 22. Woolley (Grand Valley) |
| 12. Graham (Akron St. Vincent) | 23. Marquette (McComb) |

The way this report is constructed centers around writing 39 short essays (one for each weight class) over a six or seven day period. There is no reason to write them in any particular order (thanks to the work processor), so I start first with those that seem easiest -- like ones that contains names such as Dernlan, St. John, or Lowther. That gives me a little more time to collect information on difficult weight classes (far too many this year) 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. What makes it even worse is that this class (along with 135#) is my longest winning streak in Division III dating back to 1984 -- a streak I'm anxious to extend.

My eventual choice has finally settled on the talented, but so far unlucky Bret Born. As a sophomore, he qualified for Columbus only to get pinned in the first round, a match he might have won. Last year at 160#, he got an absolutely horrible draw losing to two-time state qualifiers Hostetler and DiFranco and failing to qualify. This year he has moved up to 189# where his speed and skills have rarely been seen in the past. Nonetheless, he is on the smallish side and he will have to avoid the "muscling" game where pushing and shoving become an end in and of themselves. He won the Bishop Ready and West Geauga tournaments, but was unable to compete at Richmond Hts. -- which would have been an interesting test. McGee was at 189# last year in a year where it was absolutely loaded in the Northeast District -- and still won two bouts. This year he was a finalist at North Canton, but was only 5th at Bishop Ready. He and Born dominate here. Graham and Seyer are my favorites for the last two spots, but the competition is really wide open.

As usual at these upper weights, the Denison District is loaded with plenty of experienced talent. Reynolds won a state 3rd place medal -- going 4-1 and losing only to state champion Edwards. This year he has not lost to a Division III foe -- Heath has been a problem, though -- and was 2nd at the OVAC. He is so strong that he may be able to take away Born's speed advantage. Tolson is another returning state qualifier who is enormously strong. Raymond has beaten him in the past. Davis, Metzger, and Haegele lead the Central District contenders, but fall behind the top pair. Haegele, though, seems to be gaining in stature each week. Two other contenders deserve mention. Schumacher (Woodsfield), only a

sophomore, was an OVAC semi-finalist and I feel guilty about not ranking him, and Hudson (Malvern) who is relatively new to the sport, but has shown real potential. Incidentally, state qualifier Brent Burkhart (Shadyside) has left that squad and evidently will not compete in the tournament process. He was a state quarter-finalist last year.

There are eight potential qualifiers at Fostoria, but only five openings. State quarter-finalist Wasiniak has picked up right where he left off last year and has been splendid all year -- winning at Edison, Bellevue, and Clyde. He is a fine combination of speed and strength and may give Born more trouble than the physically strongest. Scally and Klima have been competing against each other and Wasiniak all year. Scally has won one tourney and placed third or better in three others. His victory was at the largest of the four -- Marion Harding. Klima, too, has been busy with a wide assortment of places. Last year Scally was also a state qualifier, while Klima fell short. Partee was the "A" Classic champ against a strong field. The remaining quartet -- Arbogast, McGrath, Wannemacher, and Marquette -- are experienced district qualifiers. In this particular district, the luck of the draw may play a real role in determining the eventual qualifiers.

Masters is a standout in the Southwest District where he was a Division II state qualifier last year. He'll challenge anybody in this field. Howell is a hard-working journeyman performer who missed state qualification on a criteria decision last year. Hickman is my choice for the third berth, although Cramer and Clift (Batavia) could be factors.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JACK LOWTHER (WELLINGTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Meade (Licking Hts.) | 13. Painter (Casstown Miami East) |
| 3. Kennedy (Ontario) | 14. Schafer (Black River) |
| 4. Froehlich (Columbus Academy) | 15. Agostinelli (Bellaire St. John) |
| 5. Medon (Woodmore) | 16. Courter (Springfield NE) |
| 6. Hupp (Bridgeport) | 17. Bannister (Wauseon) |
| 7. Jones (Brookville) | 18. Mays (Cadiz) |
| 8. Angeloro/Shaw (Perry) | 19. Loboda (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 9. Paxson (Kansas Lakota) | 20. Burre (Huron) |
| 10. Paulus (Rootstown) | 21. Aul (Tusky Valley) |
| 11. Hammond (Garrettsville Garfield) | 22. Mangas/Lewis (Ayersville) |
| 12. Weber (Archbold) | 23. Wagers (Wyoming) |

While heavyweights are a volatile and upsets occur with great frequency, Jack Lowther would seem to be one of the surest picks in Division III. At 6'2", 275#, he is enormously strong, reasonable agile, and very confident in his ability to win against any kind of competition. Last year he was involved in two epic state bouts winning on a fall in overtime in the quarter-finals after a 9-9 tie in regulation, and then dropping a heart-stopping 10-9 decision in the state finals. This year he has not been challenged -- not even at the MIT where he pinned Terebeniec -- and ends most of his bouts on quick falls.

Lowther will exit from a very non-descript district with no one there to challenge him. Schafer, Paulus, and Hammond all missed state qualification by a match or two last year, but were pinned by Lowther. Angeloro has made some rapid strides and looks to be a qualifier. Loboda and Bochik (Chagrin Falls) are real long-shots. None of this group except Lowther is likely to place -- although as we all know, 5th and 6th place are more of a question of bracket positioning than real skill under the current consolation rules.

At the Denison District, there is an interesting array of performers. State qualifier Meade was 2nd at Licking Hts. (to Division I, Poehler), and has performed at a high level all year. Froehlich also has been a solid performer over the last two years and is rated above Meade by many Columbus observers. Hupp won the OVAC and has lost once this year (to an out-of-state wrestler). Meade pinned him in the first period at Districts last year. Agostinelli has made real progress this year, and despite six losses, may be a successful state candidate. Recently, he lost to the excellent Division II wrestler Bill Miller by just 6-4. Mays is another solid candidate as is Aul -- who pinned Agostinelli last year. It's a crowded field here.

Neither the quality nor the depth is quite so good at Fostoria. Kennedy has beaten virtually everyone in the eastern part of that district -- and his only loss was in the Gorman finals to Dietz, a Division II stalwart. Last year he was the state alternate -- twice losing go-to-state bouts by fall. Medon was behind Moyer last year, but he has come into his own this year. He is currently undefeated and winner of both the "A" Classic and Gibsonburg titles. Paxson is a cut beneath these top two, while Weber, Bannister and Burre are somewhat further behind. One intriguing possibility is Gockstetter (Western Reserve), who has had some important victories lately.

Two-time state qualifier Jones is ranked, but so far has not wrestled for Brookville. Last year he did much the same thing, competing only nine times before sectional action. He is the only placement threat from the Dayton District. Should he not wrestle the qualifiers from this district will be first-round delicacies for the competitors from other districts.

TEAMS

1. Bishop Ready -- It has to happen early for Bishop Ready, because after 140#, it isn't going to happen at all. However, they have four potential finalists in Wright, Smiles, Kruse, and DiSabato -- and, perhaps, some hope with Amicon and Castle. That should be enough to win.
2. Wellington -- The mammoth Lowther could score nearly 30 points with his pinning ways, and there are some excellent lightweights as well. A key action will be to get the Wrights and Broud at just the right weight, and then hope that Hartman keeps improving.
3. Archbold -- They probably have the best all-around Division III dual meet team in the state. Whether they have enough individual stars to win is problematical -- although Martz and Jernigan should do well and if they can make Nguyen more aggressive, they have a chance.

4. Delta -- The defending champs had great depth last year, but now they'll have to depend on individual brilliance. Mattin and Sintobin will score a lot of points, but only Hopkins seems capable of helping.
5. West Liberty Salem -- Two champions score a lot of points, but then what? The answer is that two champions score a lot of points.
6. Otsego -- Soto, Kitchen, and Genson should all grab high places. After that, Barnes and possibly one or two others could qualify.
7. Bridgeport -- Again, essentially a three man team with the excellent Frohnafel leading the way. Foston and Hupp are potential placers, while Fehn and Springer are their only other hopes.
8. Cadiz -- Truly a team that could finish almost anywhere. The Jones twins are flat out excellent, while Case, Rocchi, Hennis, and Mays could help. The key factor is Wade Gibson and what he can contribute to the team effort. with him in good form, they could be in the top four.
9. Bellbrook -- Not a well-known team, but one with plenty of potential. The two Kosins have performed well all year, and Masters can be a big contributor. Fisher could also help.
10. Kansas Lakota -- Another excellent team that may lack enough up-top firepower. Biddle, Lippert, Tyson, and Paxson are the big hopes.
11. Waynesdale -- They have some nice middleweights with Unkefer, Reber, Hartel and Hostetler. They'd like Fowler and Swinehart to help, but they'll sorely miss state qualifier Windom who apparently will be unable to compete.
12. Ledgemont -- Every year they score better than expected and, perhaps, it will happen again. Feckanin, McGee, and DiFranco are their top guns.