

STEELEY

1984

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 regional is examined as to whom its representatives might be. Second, is to stimulate interest in the whole state tournament process throughout the state. 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.

In terms of caliber of wrestling, this is, perhaps, a slightly better than average year in Ohio. Much of this quality is evident in the current junior class which suggests that 1985 will be a banner year both in terms of competition and recruitment. As always, there are some genuine superstars like Heffernan, Willaman, Gintert, and Goad, but, in addition, a number of weights are showing outstanding depth. Next year, the upper weights will be filled with outstanding senior competitors who will attract nationwide interest.

Clearly the major change in 1984 is the new state tournament procedure. The regional approach has been adopted leading to what its exponents call "a fairer system of state qualification." In principle, this is a step forward, but it will be negated if more thought isn't place into the mechanics of operating this new program. Of crucial importance is the pairings at the regional level. Where an odd number of districts feed into a regional, how will the district champs be placed so one side of the bracket is not burdened with too many of the superior wrestlers? The old "district approach" had its inequities, but poor pairings will cause more harm than good with the regional format. Not only am I concerned with odd district feeding systems, but also with all those two qualifier districts and regionals. As mentioned in the "A" introduction, past experience has shown that great care needs to be exercised in going from districts to regionals. In addition, true second wrestle-backs are crucial at both the district and regional level--the former because disparity in schedules can cause improper seedings and the latter because first and third place winners can then be fairly separated.

At the same time, we ought to be reevaluating the wrestle-back used at the district, regional and state level. The requirement of losing to a finalist before being allowed in the consolation rounds is archaic and unfair. Every year fewer tournaments held in this state use such a rule. Instead, most have opted for the much fairer procedure of permitting wrestlers into the consolation if the competitor defeating them makes the semi-finals. It adds only one round to the tournament, but pays off in fairer placements.

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. That is a good way to get this report mailed to you when it is first prepared. My address is:

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"AAA"

This classification is almost totally dominated by Northeast District Schools. Last year, all 13 state champs and 23 of the 26 finalists came from either the Mentor or Firestone sites. In the past three years, only four non-district wrestlers have captured state titles. This is not true in "AA" or "A", and it would be good for the sport if more geographical dispersion occurred in the big school classification, too.

This year will also see a new peak in the dominance of Catholic schools in "AAA". Of course, St. Edward has won six consecutive titles; but, in addition, St. Joseph, St. Ignatius, Chanel, Lake Catholic, Toledo St. Francis, Toledo St. John, and Cincinnati St. Xavier should finish in the top 12. Last year, 12 of the 26 finalists came from Catholic high schools, and this year that figure could again increase.

Finally, predicting "AAA" results has been made much more difficult because the Toledo area will, just before districts, decide which schools will go to Upper Arlington and which to Admiral King. This system is so at variance with the rest of the state and has so much potential for mischief, that it ought to be examined more closely. I'm sure Whitmer will be the most popular site since it heads for Upper Arlington rather than going to the super-tough Admiral King regional. My guess is that Rogers should get the No. 1 seed, so that Toledo St. Francis and Toledo St. John go to Upper Arlington; but, of course, that is only speculation.

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JACK MACKO (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Wilson (Toledo St. Francis) | 9. Palchesko (Nordononia) |
| 3. Ehrbacher (Valley Forge) | 10. Bell (Copley) |
| 4. Brokloff (N. Canton) | 11. Zeller (Glen Oak) |
| 5. Edwards (Franklin Hts.) | 12. Marder (Chanel) |
| 6. Gelvin (Kett. Fair East) | 13. Caskey (Xenia) |
| 7. Mains (Westerville South) | 14. Garcia (Lakewood) |
| 8. Norton (Lakota) | 15. Rizzo (Mayfield) |

This is a weight class dominated by experienced juniors and seniors with something to prove. Wilson, Brokloff, Gelvin, and Mains were all losers last year in the bout that would have sent them to the state meet. Even more strangely, Macko lost his best-of-five wrestle off with state runner-up Kevin Biggs by a 3-2 margin, including three overtime struggles. So there is a lot of frustration (and expense) at this weight class.

Macko, however, is an easy choice because he has shown real improvement -- much more than the other Ed's lightweight. He has good size, excellent technique, and tremendous poise. Nobody has come close to him this year. If he has a weakness, it's getting out. My only real question is whether he can hold the weight the entire year.

Kornblut (Brush) was my original second choice, but it now seems certain that he won't be competing. His talent with the legs and stubborn tenaciousness made him extremely difficult to beat. His absence will give others more of an opportunity to place.

Macko will be joined at Admiral King by some outstanding competitors. Ehrbacher is an unheralded talent, but his amazing strength and determination will carry him a long way. His biggest problem, though, is experience, even if he is a senior. This makes him more of a counter-wrestler reacting off the first moves of others rather than initiating the action.

Assuming Wilson is at Upper Arlington, I believe Bell and the freshmen Marder and Schaub (Ashland) will be other strong contenders.

The absence of Kornblut will open up the Mentor Regional. Brokloff, only a sophomore, is very good on his feet, although he seems to have a tendency not to finish his moves. He'll have trouble, though, with the real strong boys. Along with state qualifier Palchesko, he'll lead this group to Columbus. The last two spots are wide open with Zeller and Rizzo being challenged by Malcuit (Louisville), Gardner (Mentor), and Taylor (Central-Hower).

The Southwest Regional can only hope for a low place at Columbus. Norton and Gelvin are their best shots, with Caskey a close third. I'd particularly watch the exciting Norton, who I think has the style to create a big upset even though Gelvin may be steadier.

Mains and Edwards will join Wilson out of the Upper Arlington Regional, and that is a formidable trio. Because that regional encompasses a wide geographical area, comparisons are difficult to make; but Kaminski (Whitmer) and Mouch (Toledo St. John) would seem to have the best shot at the fourth opening.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMP: RICH HARTMAN (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| 2. | Klostermeier (Toledo St. John) | 9. | Haube (Anthony Wayne) |
| 3. | Donavan (Chanel) | 10. | Blanton (Cin. St. Xavier) |
| 4. | Biggs (St. Edward) | 11. | Blevins (Akron East) |
| 5. | Noble (Lebanon) | 12. | Nelson (North Royalton) |
| 6. | Behringer (Defiance) | 13. | Crevar (Nordonia) |
| 7. | Lampa (Valley Forge) | 14. | Green (North Canton) |
| 8. | Bruno (Meadowdale) | 15. | Jordan (Westerville South) |

This has been a topsy-turvy weight class so far this year, but by season's end I expect to see Rick Hartman take control. Hartman, a defending state champion, is just now getting comfortable with the weight; and, as that happens, he'll become even more dominant. His analytical approach makes him very tough to beat after he's wrestled somebody once, and in that respect at least, he reminds me of some really great wrestlers like Jimmy Heffernan or Pat Milkovich.

Hartman will have to be careful because he'll be exiting from a dynamite regional. Assuming Klostermeier's at Upper Arlington, that still leaves state runners-up Kevin, Biggs, and Dan Donovan along with the aggressive sophomore Lampa, state qualifier Whitcomb, and the rugged Nelson competing for the other three qualifying spots. This is an awesome line-up. Donovan beat Hartman the week he went to 105#, while Lampa has split with Donovan. Biggs, of course, has had a relatively slow start, losing three times and drawing Crevar. Whitcomb and Nelson dominate the Pioneer Conference with the latter having shown tremendous improvement. I look for Biggs and Donovan to join Hartman in Columbus, but Lampa can be upset because of his weaknesses on his feet. Everly (Galion) is undefeated, but has not had the competition necessary to do well here.

Bruno, fourth at 98#, is not the same threat at 105#, and Noble and possibly Blanton have passed him this year. Other threats in this regional might be state qualifier Suter (Greenville), if he chooses to go at this weight or Gordon (Edgewood) just up from "AA" competition.

At Upper Arlington, the aggressive Klostermeier should be pre-eminent. He wrestled some great bouts while finishing fifth last year at Columbus, including a 16-10 loss to state champ Kapper. State qualifier Behringer should again do well, though he suffers from a weak competitive schedule. Haube and Jordan should be favorites to snag the last two qualifying spots.

At Mentor, the quality is substantially lower. State qualifier Blevins probably is best, but he also suffers from a weak schedule. I like Crevar and Green, but Huber (Akron North), Brecksville champ Berdysz (Mentor), Brown (Eastlake North), and Williams (Hudson) will all contend. This group will be first-round losers at Columbus.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: DAVE ROMAN (MADISON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Carlin (St. Edward) | 10. Danko (Mentor) |
| 3. Shire (Toledo St. Francis) | 11. Wise (Xenia) |
| 4. Scholtz (North Royalton) | 12. Melvin (Meadowdale) |
| 5. Hart (Worthington) | 13. Worley (Carrollton) |
| 6. Hunter (St. Joseph) | 14. Ramsey (Westlake) |
| 7. DeCamp (Centerville) | 15. King (Euclid) |
| 8. Schenk (Glen Oak) | 16. Rackett (Lebanon) |
| 9. Pergram (Middletown) | 17. Zingale (Brecksville) |
| | 18. Juskiw (Brunswick) |

This is a dynamite weight class -- maybe the best in the state for strength in every area. The wrestler who wins here will be truly deserving of his state title, as I count at least ten returning state qualifiers at this weight class.

I've gone with the immensely talented Rowan, even though he suffers from a weak schedule and a touch of inconsistency -- a quality that will be sorely tested at this weight. He was fifth last year, losing by a point to Willaman in an excellent bout. If his mind and body hold together, he'll win.

There are just so many great contenders. At Admiral King, for example, there is real power with state runner-up Dave Carlin and state fourth place winner Jeff Scholtz. Carlin lost to Rowan in the 1983 District final, but he is a tremendous competitor who pressures for six full minutes. Scholtz has the best cradle in the state -- so good that only Shire was able to stop it, even when everyone knew it was coming. In addition to this, we have state qualifier Zingale and a trio of wrestlers who have had tremendous seasons -- Ramsey, Juskiw, and Kopp (Southview) Even after this group there are wrestlers capable of the big upset like Bogdan (Medina) or Piper (Ashland).

At Mentor, there is much the same story. Rowan will face the likes of Jeff Hunter, the MVP at the prestigious St. X Tourney, Brecksville runner-up Barry Danko, and District semi-finalist Todd King, and Medina champ Jeff Schenk. One of this group will not even qualify for Columbus with King looking to be the odd man out. State qualifier Saccogna (Kent Roosevelt) has had a miserable season as he begins to grow into a middleweight, but he can't be overlooked. Tribuzzo (Wickliffe) is another long-shot for state consideration.

The Southwest Regional also has four former state qualifiers, including two district champs from last year in Wise and Pergram. Still, I think the coolly poised DeCamp is best in that area, while Pergram, Wise, and state qualifier Melvin will be pushed by Rackett (Lebanon) and Dance (Oak Hills). The Cleveland boys are tremendous at this weight, but this group also has placement potential. The key will be the first-round pairings since drawing the Upper Arlington group would be a major plus.

That's because after Shire and Hart, there's very little quality. Still, Shire is a great fundamentalist who was third last year at 105#. He's so solid and tough, that he has a good chance of being a state finalist. Hart is also good, if just a little bit "floppy". He looked very good at the North Canton Tourney, and should place at States, too. State qualifier Worley is probably overmatched outside his area, and the remaining competition is not strong.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMP: DAN WILLAMAN (NORTH CANTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Fiorenza (Mayfield) | 9. Krampel (St. Edward) |
| 3. Smith (Xenia) | 10. Rivera (Southview) |
| 4. St. John (St. Joseph) | 11. Moore (Elida) |
| 5. Jones (Galloway Westland) | 12. Hulse (Tiffin) |
| 6. Salette (Cincy St. Xavier) | 13. Carrao (Parma) |
| 7. Richards (Vincent Warren) | 14. Leonard (Lake Catholic) |
| 8. Seabolt (Toledo Rogers) | 15. Korney (Pickerington) |
| | 16. Griffith (Lebanon) |

Willaman is the best takedown man in the state, and he completely dominates this weight class. He's been out the past few weeks with a bad ankle, but that should be healed long before the tournaments begin. His set-ups are outstanding, and he mentally "cracks" the opposition with his relentless pursuit of points. He'll be a first-rate collegian.

Most of the best competition is at Willaman's regional. Fiorenza, also exceptional on his feet, was a state semi-finalist last year, and has the best chance of going with Willaman. I don't think he can wrestle the six pressure-packed minutes it'll take to beat last year's state champ. St. John is also excellent, and Fitch (West Geauga) and Leonard add additional depth at this regional. In fact, even behind this group are solid journeymen like Mance (E-N), Burnett (Collinwood), and Lightner (Alliance).

The Admiral King regional is uncharacteristically weak at this weight. There's a lot of names, but no one really stands out. Seabolt and Rivera are explosive and could pull a big upset against a top-rated boy, but it's difficult seeing them get more than a low place at best. Krampel, Carrao, Grolle (Valley Forge), and Skoda (Brunswick) are other possibilities.

The Southwest has some strong contenders. Smith has looked excellent including a victory over St. John in overtime. Saleme has been a sensational wrestler in that area until districts, when for the last two years he "bombed out". Griffith, Brewer (Lakota), and possibly Bean (Greenhills) give added depth.

There's some solid depth at the Upper Arlington regional. Richards was fifth last year, but I think Jones is somewhat better. Two-time state qualifier Shaw (Carrollton) is coming off an injury, and probably won't qualify because Moore, Hulse, Korney, Ehlinger (Defiance), and maybe Daugherty (Cambridge) are stronger. This regional could turn into a real donnybrook at this weight if people like Cabotage (Findley) and Schnorf (Sylvania Southview) are in good form. At the state level, I see Jones as a likely place-winner and a possible finalist should he be away from Willaman. Richards and a surprising Moore could also win a bout or two at the state level.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JEFF "BUBBA" STRAUSS (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Kelly (Uniontown Lake) | 11. Dodson (Hilliard) |
| 3. Hayek (Lake Catholic) | 12. Dolph (North Canton) |
| 4. Farrow (Elyria) | 13. Siske (Pickerington) |
| 5. Smith (North Olmsted) | 14. Molchak (Normandy) |
| 6. Weaver (Worthington) | 15. Beller (Wickliffe) |
| 7. Pelfrey (Dayton Wayne) | 16. Balazy (Strongsville) |
| 8. Hunter (St. Joseph) | 17. Barker (Stow) |
| 9. Price (Fairfield) | 18. Beardmore (Cambridge) |
| 10. Shadler (Rogers) | 19. Gentry (Cincy St. X) |

This is a deep weight class without any predominant stars. Realistically, any of eight or ten competitors could take home the state crown. At the beginning of the season, Bubba Strauss would have been an obvious choice after a brilliant sophomore campaign, which saw him finish second to the powerful Singletary at 119#. Since that time, he has wrestled erratically and seemingly without real enthusiasm. I think his hectic summer schedule has caused "burnout", and that about a six-week vacation is required. Too late for that now, so Strauss is going to have to regain his dash and flair through mental toughness. A great takedown wrestler, Strauss is going to have to go back to basics if he's to win.

The Admiral King regional has a number of state caliber wrestlers. Farrow and Smith are the two best after Strauss, and both should place. Farrow, in particular, down from 132#, has great experience and solid skills. Smith, the brilliant junior, is an exceptional competitor whose only real weakness is on his feet. Shadler is the best choice as a fourth qualifier, but Molchak and Balazy definitely have upset potential.

Kelly placed fourth last year, and is just now coming off an injury which sidelined him much of the year. If healthy, he will be marginally the best at Mentor. However, Hayek, sixth last year, will challenge for that top spot. Hunter and Dolph will probably be favored to capture the last two state spots. Hunter, only a sophomore, was most impressive in beating my "AA" choice Pat Fitzgerald. Dolph had Strauss beat at the North Canton Tourney, but then threw it away and lost in overtime. Beller is a tenacious wrestler who doesn't get the credit he deserves, and could grab a qualifying spot as he very nearly did last year. Barker is a long-shot.

I see four solid contenders at Upper Arlington including three former state qualifiers. Dodson, the only non-qualifier, is rated the best in the Columbus area. However, I think Weaver is still the strongest contender, if he can develop more consistency. Dodson follows closely behind, but there is a gap between those two and Siske and Beardmore. I would not be surprised if one or both of these latter boys were upset.

The Southwest Regional is not as strong as the other three. Pelfrey and Price are standouts, and could, perhaps, garner a low place. Price is only a junior, and has good long-range potential. Gentry and Steffen (Oak Hills) are possibilities for the last two berths, but I anticipate at least one surprise here. Wells (Edgewood) is the wrestler who may well provide it.

132#

PROJECTED CHAMP: BRAD GINTERT (HOWLAND)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Hawley (St. Joseph) | 9. Maupin (Lebanon) |
| 3. Boston (Toledo Bowsher) | 10. Hennig (Mentor) |
| 4. Drew (Toledo Rogers) | 11. Disney (Fairfield) |
| 5. St. George (Cincy St. X) | 12. Tusick (North Olmsted) |
| 6. Gallagher (Chardon) | 13. Cunningham (Watterson) |
| 7. Black (Stow) | 14. Saxton (Elyria) |
| 8. Moton (Mansfield) | 15. Beal (Lorain) |
| | 16. Pauly (Ashland) |

This is a sharply divided weight. The top four are all excellent and stand substantially ahead of the next, much larger group of about 10 competitors. Defending state champ Gintert has been a finalist the last two years, and is an awesome mat wrestler. He is very difficult to escape from, and his spiral is exceptional. However, he is not nearly as aggressive against good opponents as he should be, and against state referees he'll have to concern himself about stalling calls. He has excellent poise and confidence, and while not upset-proof, he will be very difficult to beat.

Hawley was awesome early in the season, and then hit a slow spot. Now he is starting to regain the level he had in mid-December. He and Gintert will

emerge from the same regional, which makes another confrontation in the finals a strong possibility. Black and Gallagher are also at Mentor, which means some rugged action all the way through that tournament. One boy to watch there is Paul Hennig. In the past two years, he has knocked Bubba Strauss and Mike Mulhull out of state competition, and then immediately faltered himself. If healthy, he is one competitor who could upset anyone of the top four, including Gintert. He is the fifth member of my Top Ten at Mentor, which means somebody very good is going to be left at home. Allison (Akron North) and Parker (Nordonia) are two others there who also need to be considered. In summary, this regional stands far above the others at this weight. Gintert and Hawley should dominate with Gallagher and Black also qualifying. However, Hennig is the wild card in this deck who can spring the major upset.

Boston should be at the Upper Arlington Regional, and no one there should challenge him. Greer (Tiffin), Clark (Lima Shawnee), and maybe Pontius (Cambridge) should join Cunningham in the struggle for places. Not much here looking at state competition, with the notable exception of Boston. In that local area, Samborsky (Pickerington) and Finneran (Hilliard) have a chance.

At Admiral King, the Toledo area boys should dominate. Drew is excellent and is the only wrestler here that can place at States. Moton and Pauly wrestled into overtime at the Gorman with Moton remaining undefeated. The clever Tusick is the one competitor who has the ability to leapfrog into the top five, if he is on-track at Columbus. After that, there are a lot of decent wrestlers like Saxton, Beal, Connolly (Rocky River), and Buddie (St. Ignatius). Like Hennig, Connolly is the type of wrestler who can spring the big upset.

The Southwest Regional has an interesting array of talent. Maupin and St. George are long-time area stars who have done well for several years. Maupin made it to Columbus last year. Disney has been hurt all year, but a full recovery would almost guarantee him a state spot. Hubbard (Colerain) is my fourth choice, and again this boy could do some damage in the early rounds at Columbus because of his style.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMP: TERRY KENNEDY (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Miller (Kent Roosevelt) | 9. Sell (Carrollton) |
| 3. Jaeger (Chanel) | 10. Foshee (Kenmore) |
| 4. Auker (North Canton) | 11. Kolly (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. Garland (Vandalia Butler) | 12. DeCarlo (Fairborn Baker) |
| 6. Dunn (Findlay) | 13. Karcher (Marietta) |
| 7. Marino (West Geauga) | 14. Stallard (Galloway Westland) |
| 8. Pearson (Centerville) | 15. Kane (Worthington) |
| | 16. Raptis (Cambridge) |

With the defection of Gintert and Hawley to 132#, this weight class shapes up as one of the easier ones in "AAA". My choice is the workmanlike Terry Kennedy to win a series of close matches to prevail. He'll have to hustle to beat the bigger Miller and the more experienced Jaeger, but I think the potential is there. He and Jaeger should dominate the relatively shallow Admiral King Regional, setting

them at opposite ends of the bracket in Columbus. Jaeger, a three-time state place winner, has not yet made the finals, and this might be his year. Puzitiello (Strongsville), Caporuscio (Maple Hts.), and Roberts (Shelby) are other possibilities. A battle between the first two would be an announcer's nightmare.

There is much more depth at Mentor. Miller should be an absolutely enormous 138#, and with his moves, he could be champ. However, people aren't tying up with him anymore so as to avoid his super carry. He'll have to be more flexible on the tourney trail. Auker, a state qualifier in 1983, is rock-solid, and that should be good enough for a low to medium place in Columbus. Marino could pull some real surprises. He beat Auker at the Medina, but I wonder about his consistency. Foshee is my choice for the fourth qualifying spot, but his soft schedule makes him vulnerable. Legan (Willoughby South), Millward (Akron North), and Melegari (Louisville) are all available to take advantage of any mis-steps.

The Upper Arlington Regional has a half dozen well matched boys. I like Dunn the best, but he has had injury problems. Sell and Karcher have compiled wonderful records, but against generally suspect opposition, while Kolly, Stallard, and Kane have done well in the Columbus area. Raptis and Taggart (East Liverpool) are also top-notch stars along the river who could do well. Look for a lot of excitement in that competition.

The Southwest is also strong. Garland placed fifth last year, but has already lost to Auker and DeCarlo this year. Don't cast him aside yet. Pearson was very impressive at Brecksville, and has hope for a place at the state meet. DeCarlo, Bohsancurt (Wayne), and Shumaker (Lakota) are other possibilities. These boys will be scrappy at the state level and difficult to beat.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMP: TIM MAHHS (CENTERVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Yerse (Willoughby South)
3. Keeler (St. Edward)
4. Ross (West Carrollton)
5. Turner (North Canton)
6. Swanson (Marion Franklin)
7. Brodnik (Solon)
8. Stevens (Mansfield)
9. McGee (Ravenna)
10. Berg (Cleveland Hts.)
11. Ice (East Liverpool)

Every year, in defince of all probabillities, I choose one or two long-shots to win state crowns. This year, Tim Maahs is going to be one of those choices. I saw him place fifth at the Brecksville Tourney, but he is far, far better than that. Enormously strong, he will win a succession of close matches to escape with the state title. It will not be a formidable field that he faces at this weight class, and this lack of depth will allow him to be fully prepared for the two or three others who might challenge.

Besides Maahs, the Southwestern Regional also contains the excellent Ross and several dark-horses such as Norris (Lakota), Smith (Colerain), and Saunders (Greenhills). Only Ross (besides Maahs) will win a bout at Columbus.

With Miller moving down to 138#, Yerse stands alone at the Mentor regional. In my mind, he was the outstanding wrestler at the Brecksville Tourney with his last-second win over Maahs and his thumping of McCormick. He can attack either the legs or the upper body on his feet, and if he doesn't get sloppy, should be a finalist. Turner, Berg, and McGee are my other three choices to exit the regional. However, each of them has at least one weakness, and people like Thoreson (Mentor), Brown (Walsh), or Borsellino (Glen Oak) could pull an upset. Thoreson, in particular, can be very tough if he controls his weight.

At Admiral King, the erratic Keeler should win rather easily. Something of an up-and-down wrestler, he was very impressive at the North Canton Tourney. Stevens will sneak up on a lot of people there, while Brodnik will shake off his current slump to place. There are a lot of good boys in the hunt for a place at this regional. Haxton (Strongsville), Farine (Maple Hts.), Chambers (Lakewood), and Almeroth (Holy Name) all have solid credentials. Kraushaar (Brecksville) and Haman (St. Ignatius) are long-shots to get to Columbus.

The Upper Arlington Regional is very weak. Except for Swanson, it's difficult to see anybody from that area winning a bout at States. The other regionals will be hoping to draw this group for first round action. Coldiron (Whitmer) and Plotnick (Gahenna Lincoln) would be two other names to go along with the rated Swanson and Ice.

155#

PROJECTED CHAMP: KEN KASLER (NORTH OLMSTED)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Kenville (North Canton)
3. Renz (Brecksville)
4. Grimes (Central-Hower)
5. Mitchell (St. Edward)
6. Mickley (Louisville)
7. Waterer (Galion)
8. Brown (Gahenna Lincoln)
9. Freson (Roger Bacon)
10. Randall (Akron North)
11. Shaut (Oakhills)
12. Celek (Port Clinton)
13. Murchland (Centerville)
14. King (Midpark)
15. Graham (Xenia)
16. Ferryman (Northland)
17. Beier (Toledo St. John)

With the possible exception of 112#, this is the best and deepest weight class in the state. Most of this depth emanates from two regionals -- Mentor and Admiral King.

At Admiral King, the field is loaded. My choice for state champion, Ken Kasler, heads the field there. Kasler has been tremendously impressive in compiling an unblemished record so far this year against solid competition. He is tremendously quick and skilled, and uses his height to good advantage. The knock against Kasler is that he is not physical enough to go with the likes of Kenville and Renz; the regional and state competition should certainly lay this issue to rest once and for all.

Renz and Mitchell should follow closely behind Kasler at Admiral King. Renz, at 167# all year, will be a real "hammer" at this weight. The outstanding wrestler at the Brecksville Tourney -- his biggest problem is giving his legs away and then

trying to counter. It won't work against the real good kids. Mitchell is great on his feet, but his lack of varsity experience may hurt him. Renz and Mitchell have absolutely contrasting styles -- Mitchell a takedown wrestler, while Renz is a brutal mat wrestler. Kasler falls somewhere in between.

Behind this trio comes two state qualifiers -- Waterer and Celek. Waterer may be at 145#, but if not he'll probably wish he was by the end of this regional. Still, if the pairings are right, he should be the fourth qualifier. King has really come on lately, and may pull an upset at this weight.

At Mentor, a very comparable situation exists. Kenville, Mickley, and Grimes all placed at Columbus last year, and they've all had excellent seasons this year. Kenville doesn't do much, but his defense is amazing. Nobody seemingly can take him down. Mickley has much the same style so when those two wrestle, it's like watching paint dry. Grimes is a raw talent with amazing power. He'll be awfully short for this weight, though.

Behind this group are state qualifiers Randall and the oft injured DeCarlo (St. Joseph). Both Mizen (Willoughby South) and Norris (Cleveland Hts.) have upset potential, too. This should have spectacular fan attraction.

Freson and Shaut lead a much weaker Southwest delegation. Along with Murchland and Graham, it is a very representative group, but it will come up short when facing the tigers from the north. In most years, that quality group will place several wrestlers -- this year it won't be any.

The Upper Arlington regional will be the weak sister that everybody hopes to draw. The best chances are scattered all over the area this regional covers. Beier and Fann (Macomber) lead the Toledo area, while Winston (New Philadelphia) does best out of the central region. The strongest boys may be from Columbus, and that's because Brown and Ferryman have shown improvement.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JOHN HEFFERNAN (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Ginley (St. Ignatius) | 8. Cassidy (West Geauga) |
| 3. Holman (Upper Arlington) | 9. Hakaïm (Strongsville) |
| 4. Hoeflin (Toledo St. Francis) | 10. Reinbolt (Walsh) |
| 5. Upton (Vandalia Butler) | 11. Schwarz (Oakhills) |
| 6. Korleski (Fitch) | 12. Studebaker (Beavercreek) |
| 7. Bayer (Brecksville) | |

John Heffernan towers over the rest of this relatively weak weight class. As I write this, he is 16-0 with 14 falls -- most of them in the first period. He is best described by the word "awesome". The only events that could prevent his capture of the state title would be a serious injury or a loss via disqualification. He hits legal moves so hard that they cause apparent injury with referees penalizing him. Let's hope that kind of situation can be avoided. He'll be the third Heffernan brother to be a state champ, and there really shouldn't be too many close matches with the exception, perhaps, of Ginley.

Cinley, only a junior, is the best of the rest. Already a state placewinner as a sophomore, he can do nothing but get better. His big advantage will be that he will be away from Heffernan at both the regional and state level. The Pioneer Conference duo of Hakaim and Bayer should be the other two qualifiers out of the Admiral King Regional with Parker (Copley) as a darkhorse.

At Mentor, there is confusion of 167's. I look at Korleski as a darkhorse for a high place at Columbus, and, perhaps, the best at Mentor. The erratic Cassidy and Reinbolt stand next in line, but this is an area ripe for upsets. Pipoly (E-N), McClintock (North Canton), and Seacrist (Chardon) all could put a dent in anybody's hope for a state berth. Mizen (Willoughby South), if he realizes he's better off at this weight, could also do well at this regional.

The Upper Arlington Regional seems relatively weak. I look for Holman and Hoeflin to lead the way with Schaefer (Lima Shawnee) and Tipton (Gahenna Lincoln) as possible challengers. After the top two, there is a real void at this weight.

In the Southwest, three journeymen performers, Upton, Schwarz, and Studebaker, lead the way. Again, we don't have much depth at this weight now that Freson has dropped to 155# and Gerhardstein (Elder) has suffered a broken arm. Kaufman (Lebanon) could be an outside threat.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JON MOORE (CHANEL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Foor (Elyria)
3. Inderlied (Chardon)
4. Suvak (Padua)
5. Rohe (Oakhills)
6. Prelock (Lake Catholic)
7. Hlebak (Lakota)
8. Rosemond (Rogers)
9. McMeans (Perrysburg)
10. Millimen (Clay)
11. Simmons (Carrollton)
12. Vrbancic (Southview)
13. Lorden (Alliance)

Generally wrestlers who move from "AA" to "AAA" competition have substantial problems. That has not been the case with Moore, who hasn't missed a beat this season wrestling tougher competition. He won the "AA" title with a dramatic last-second takedown that also clinched the team title for Chanel, but this year he'll probably win in easier fashion.

Again, his major competition should come from his own regional at Admiral King. Both Foor and Suvak have wrestled at 185# most of the year with outstanding success. Foor won the Mentor District last year, then finished fourth behind the other three at Columbus. He should be Moore's toughest competition, and has a reasonably good chance of beating him. However, it is not inconceivable that he'll compete at 185#. Suvak is not real good on his feet, but is tremendous on the mat. His legs are worth 5 points alone in near fall points. Again, we may see him at 185#. Rosemond should be the fourth qualifier out of this powerhouse regional.

That still leaves the rapidly improving Welch (St. Edward) and the powerful Vrbancic with no place to go the second week of March. In addition, the Toledo area has a number of other fine 175's who I hope will go to Upper Arlington. Two dark horses are Green (Cloverleaf), who needs to be able to go six hard minutes, and Kipp (Mans. Madison)

At Mentor, the erratic Inderlied is probably the best candidate for state honors with Prelock and Lorden somewhat behind. Inderlied, a former World Schoolboy Champ, has the throws to upset anyone. He can be awesome at times. He also can get pinned leading 10-0, and give away matches that are virtually "in the bag". He's hard to figure, but he must be treated with real respect. Prelock, still only a junior, has had a fine season losing only to Moore and Inderlied, while Lorden finished second at the MIT.

The Upper Arlington Regional features mainly Toledo stars like Millimen, McMeans, and Ustaszewski (Toledo St. John). This group along with Simmons figures to have serious first-round problems in Columbus. Jones (Marion-Franklin) is an outside possibility here.

The Southwestern Regional features state qualifier Rohe and Hlebak -- both capable of placing. I look for Rohe to edge out the Lakota boy for regional honors. Behind them are eight to ten possible qualifiers with unexceptional state credentials. Rogan (Springfield South) is the one exception who could challenge the top two. His weak schedule is a major hindrance, though, Boddie (Xenia) is another boy who marginally stands out above the rest.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMP: SHAWN FINNAN (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Held (St. Edward) | 8. Freelon (Ashland) |
| 3. Sullivan (Lake Catholic) | 9. White (Stebbins) |
| 4. Andrus (Toledo St. John) | 10. Hamilton (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. Schehr (Sycamore) | 11. Vanadia (Normandy) |
| 6. Fantacone (Mayfield) | 12. Campbell (Pickerington) |
| 7. Bateman (Worthington) | 13. Roberts (Xenia) |

The top boys are all from the northern part of the state, and the best of this group is state runner-up Shawn Finnan. A very large 185# (he competed at heavy-weight for some time), Finnan is still settling into the weight. His dual meet loss to Held will be reversed come March when the weight allowance is more, and he can eat the last day of a tourney. He'll just overpower the very skilled, but somewhat smaller Ed's wrestler. Held is a close second, and he has shown marvelous improvement the last two years. He still owes some folks for the second day of district, when he lost two crucial bouts in quick succession. If Suvak competes at this weight, he'll be a tough third at Admiral King, leaving one spot open for Freelon and Vanadia. Should Foor also go at this weight, it will be the finest group of 185's at one site in a long time, and some good people will get left home. Van Rossem (Medina) and Banks (Brunswick) are good, but are in the wrong geographical area.

Sullivan has come on very strongly this year, and the big junior should cop top honors at Mentor. Fantacone, runner-up at North Canton, got "decked" early against Prelock, and Sullivan is even better. After that, the regional is very weak with people like Pilmer (Alliance) and Musci (Stow) the best of the rest.

The Upper Arlington Regional has four name wrestlers in Andrus, Bateman, Hamilton, and Campbell. The last three are all former state qualifiers, but the first man is best now. Hannon (Defiance) will make a strong effort to unseat one of these boys, and I think Hamilton and particularly Campbell are both candidates. Budd (Whitmer) is another outside shot.

Schehr is a shrunk-down heavyweight who could capture a low place at Columbus. Still, this region is weak with folks like White and Roberts in the top echelon. Most of these boys will be ground up in the first round.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMP: CHRIS D'ESPOSITO (TOLEDO ST. FRANCIS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Cameron (Alliance) | 10. Chenetski (Pickerington) |
| 3. Datkuliak (Louisville) | 11. Reid (St. Joseph) |
| 4. Stewart (Xenia) | 12. Wittrock (Cincy St. X) |
| 5. Noble (Solon) | 13. Mone (Garfield Hts.) |
| 6. Farrow (New Philadelphia) | 14. Halton (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 7. Shriner (Ashland) | 15. Korleski (Fitch) |
| 8. McDonough (Greenhills) | 16. Blue (Middletown) |
| 9. Dunn (St. Edward) | 17. VanValkenburg (Groveport) |
| | 18. Sullivan (Lake Catholic) |

This is a terrible weight class -- the worst in "AAA". You can always tell when a weight is very good or very poor by the large number of names listed. With the good classes, there are a lot of excellent contestants to name; and with poor weights, I list everyone I can think of, hoping to hit a possible winner.

My choice is Chris D'Esposito, the solid and very experienced heavyweight from Toledo St. Francis. Already a winner over my "AA" choice, DeMorris McDonald, he has the poise to win a lot of close and strategic bouts sure to occur at this weight. He'll also have to overcome the plague that has hit my last two choices, Mike Foor and Matt Smith. Both were comfortably ahead when disaster struck and they were pinned. I certainly can see D'Esposito losing, but I doubt that he'll throw away a big lead.

The rest of the Upper Arlington field is a varied lot. Farrow is from a smaller "AAA" school that wrestles an uneven schedule, and Chenetski, runner-up at the Medina field follows far behind these three.

The Mentor Regional has the most depth of any in the state. Cameron, Datkuliak, and Reid are all solid performers, and Cameron, in particular, has had an outstanding year. Short and stocky, he is difficult to score on and amazingly agile. Reid is still young and growing, and his time will come in 1985, but there is a chance he'll start early. Datkuliak has great tools, but seems to lose his concentration, and at the upper weights that can be quickly fatal. Halton, Korleski (Fitch), Padavick (Madison), and Murphy (Kent Roosevelt) are all possibilities at this site. The boy to watch, though, is Sullivan (Lake Catholic) who has shown great improvement. He could possibly qualify.

The Southwest is difficult to decipher. Stewart qualified for the state last year, but is certainly not unbeatable. The 320# Wittrock won the St. Xavier tournament over Stewart, Reid, and McDonough, but his skills revolve mainly around weight. It's not smart to "shoot" underneath him, and if he cannot use his great weight, he's in trouble. Blue is an unknown factor with a perfect 13-0 record and 12 falls, but he wrestles a weak schedule.

The Admiral King Regional is not strong at heavyweight. State qualifier Shriner, the solid Noble, and the improving Dunn look to be the top three. Mone has had a boatload of pins due to his very aggressive style, and with the generally even quality of competition, he certainly has a chance of qualifying.

All in all, this weight class does not possess the quality of heavyweights that we've seen the past couple years. What it does have to commend it will be a wide variety of body types and close competition.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward -- A beautifully balanced team that should have few problems coming home with its seventh consecutive team crown. There are only three weight classes (119#, 132#, and 175#) where Ed's won't be favored to qualify a wrestler for Columbus. The lightweights, with the exception of Macko, have not improved as much as anticipated, but the upper weights have been outstanding. Hefferman and Macko are almost sure champs, and Kennedy and Strauss have to be favored. If Biggs, Strauss, Keeler, Mitchell, and Held come through, they could break the team point record.
2. North Canton Hoover -- Walt Tolarchyk has molded another splendid team -- good enough to capture their third consecutive runner-up trophy. The brilliant Willaman is the kingpin of the team, but Kenville, Auker, Turner, Brokloff, and Dolph could score in Columbus. They have certainly replaced Nordonia as the finest public school team in the state.
3. St. Ignatius -- A team that has three potential finalists in Hartman, Ginley, and Finnan. That's worth a minimum of 60 points -- almost always good enough for third place. What is needed to move up is additional help and that is probably lacking. Buddie is the best chance with Bilardo and Kirman other possibilities. So third is their best hope, and any mis-step by the top three will drop them down quickly.
4. Toledo St. Francis -- A surprise choice, since they are rated behind Rogers and St. John in their own area. However, they have the individual stars like Shire, D'Esposito, and Wilson to score heavily at Columbus, plus a strong candidate, Hoeflin, in the weak 167# class. In addition, they should be seeded into the Whitmer District, and thence to the weaker Upper Arlington Regional, rather than to the brutal Admiral King competition.
5. St. Joseph -- A team that is still a year away from reaching its potential. Three of its stars -- St. John and both Hunters -- are still underclassmen, and several others with potential, such as Reid, will also be back. The key is for Hawley to be a finalist, the others to place, and somebody like a DeCarlo or a Calabrese to score at the state level.
6. Chanel -- The defending "AA" champ will have a one year shot at "AAA" competition before returning to their normal classification next year. They would easily win a second "AA" crown, but it will take a maximum effort to finish this high in the big-school competition. Moore should be a finalist, and Jaeger and Donovan should place. Other help has to come from Marder, Patsolic/Govang, or Jackson, and that isn't likely.
7. Rogers -- A fine dual meet team that may not have the big guns in a tournament format. I really like Drew, but Seabolt and Shadler are shaky. Rosemond is in a tough weight class, and people like Martin and Miller will be lost at Admiral King. This is, of course, under the assumption that Rogers will wrestle in the Rogers District.
8. Centerville -- A southwestern team with some heavy hitters. I like Maahs to grab an upset win at 145#, and Pearson to nail down a low place at 138#. Unfortunately, two of their other stars are at 112# and 155# -- the two most talented weight classes.

9. Lake Catholic -- Sullivan, Prelock, and Hayek can all score at the state level, and they emerge from a regional that is weak at several weights where Lake is strong. Folks like Leonard, Warren, and the other Sullivan will have to help if they are to move up. This team suffered a real loss when Sean Stewart was injured, since he would have done very well at the relatively weak 167# class.
10. Xenia -- A finely balanced squad with a number of potential state candidates. They should get at least 4 or 5 through the Southwestern Regional, but the question is whether they can score at the state level. I like Smith the best, but Wise, Caskey, Stewart, and Graham are good. In addition, there are people like Roberts, Dagley, and Boddie who could do well.
11. North Olmsted -- A team that is built around Kasler, Smith, and Tusick. If they wrestle up to potential and Walker or SanFilippo can pull a major upset or two, this team could make the Top Ten.
12. Worthington -- A team that has consistently disappointed at the state level. However, Hart has been outstanding at the tough 112# class, while Bateman and Weaver have previous state experience. Have Kane hit a hot week-end, and they could move well up into the Top Ten. Clark, at 105#, is also a long-shot opportunity.
13. Cincy St. Xavier -- A team with some real experienced talent that has never quite jelled. Saleme and Wittrock should lead the way with St. George and Blanton close behind. Then it's up to people like Bechtel and the little Saleme.
14. Toledo St. John -- Klostermeier and Andrus can score a lot of points, but the second wave of attackers is weak. Mouch, Ustaszewski, Beier, and Anderson need to help out, and that is more likely if they are funnelled through the Upper Arlington Regional.

"AA"

During the past few years, this classification has provided us with most of the exciting team races and many of the most memorable bouts. That is because there are good teams and outstanding individuals from every corner of the state, and no one team or even several teams have been able to consistently dominate. For example, since the three-class system was initiated in 1976, only 3 "AAA" high schools have won state crowns as compared to 6 "AA" high schools.

Chanel would have been a strong favorite to defend its state team title, but they had just barely enough enrollment to qualify for "AAA"--if only for one year. That will again leave the team trophy competition wide open. When two great wrestlers battle not only for an individual state crown, but also for team laurels, it really creates tremendous excitement. During the past few years, most of this kind of action has been provided in "AA."

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: MARK MARINELLI (COLUMBUS DESALES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Haines (Akron St. Vincent) | 9. Getgey (Mariemont) |
| 3. Thurn (Clyde) | 10. Angle (Aurora) |
| 4. Purcell (Streetsboro) | 11. Crow (Swanton) |
| 5. Krantz (Beachwood) | 12. Preece (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 6. Mitchell (Dayton Northridge) | 13. Lynd (South Point) |
| 7. Cassidy (Coventry) | 14. Griffin (Reading) |
| 8. King (Eastwood) | 15. Cofland (Cadiz) |
| | 16. Bowlick (Cardinal Stritch) |

This is an incredibly weak weight class--one of the weakest I've ever seen in "AA." In most years, Mark Marinelli would rate as a solid contender for state honors. In 1984, he towers over the rest of this field. He was very impressive at the Brecksville Tourney--losing only to the senior Ehrbacher, who simply overpowered him and crushed my "A" choice Hanson. He will not have many close bouts on the tourney trail.

I do think that most of the better 98's are crowded into the Perry (Northeast) Regional. None of them will be able to beat Marinelli, but two or three of them should place. Haines, Purcell, Krantz and Cassidy are my top four with Angle and Whinery (West Branch) possible placers. Purcell lost early to Cassidy, but since then he has been outstanding. At the Hudson Tourney, he had three falls and a 14-1 decision. He has a chance of being a finalist.

The other regionals are all competitive, but weak. In the Southwest, Mitchell and Getgey look to be best although Griffin has had a solid season. Mitchell is my choice from among this group to place.

At Fostoria, Marinelli will contend primarily with Thurn--if he is at this weight. There have been conflicting reports on his status, but he would be a fine 98#. Crow has wrestled a solid schedule with mostly success and he should be able to qualify out of the regional. Bowllick, Axe (St. Mary Memorial) and Barnett (Willard) are other possibilities here. If Jon Kryder (Napoleon) were to compete at this weight, he certainly would have to be ranked third out of this regional.

At Tri-Valley, the mixture of competing schools is so diverse it's difficult to evaluate future prospects. I've rated Preece, Lynd and Cofland, but there are others--particularly Smith (Fairfield Union). The erratic Preece has the best potential in terms of representing that regional. Cofland, only a freshman, was second at the mammoth OVAC Tourney losing only to a two-time West Virginia state champ. He could be a threat if he continues to improve.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMP: MITCH TATONETTI (KENSTON)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Staniford (W. Salem Northwestern) | 9. Bell (Barnesville) |
| 3. Remaley (Bellevue) | 10. Kuns (Castalia Margaretta) |
| 4. Theriot (Olmsted Falls) | 11. Wakeford (Canfield) |
| 5. Silvers (Eaton) | 12. Lulfs (Evergreen) |
| 6. Fisk (Wellington) | 13. Cunningham (Deer Park) |
| 7. Fisher (Harrison) | 14. Mizer (Cadiz) |
| 8. Young (Steubenville) | 15. Riley (Wauseon) |

A weight class with tremendous potential for excitement and surprises because of the closely bunched field and the diversity of styles. Donovan, the outstanding Chanel sophomore, would have been an obvious choice here, but his school's final disposition into "AAA" really opens up the competition.

Even with his absence most of the best wrestlers are from the Northeast Regional. My choice, Mitch Tatonetti, went to Columbus last year as a freshman and has really done well this year. He won the North Canton Invitation pinning "AAA" state runner-up in the finals. His only loss was to Danko at 112#. My only quibble with him is that he has a tendency to lose his concentration and when that happens, he gets real tentative on his feet. He is always a terrific mat wrestler.

Theriot, 5th last year, and Fisk, a state qualifier, will also be at 105#. Both have had solid seasons albeit with a few more setbacks than anticipated. Staniford, however, has been sensational and has moved past both these boys. This quartet should represent the Northeast although Wakeford is excellent and has upset potential. Former state qualifier Hostetler (Apple Creek Waynedale) will be shut out of state competition this year.

The Fostoria Regional is also strong. Remaley stands well out as the best and he will be a threat to anyone at Columbus. Kuns, Lulfs and Riley are my other qualifying choices, but they do not stand that much ahead of the rest of the pack. Timpe (Swanton) and Ellis (Teays Valley) are other solid contenders. Lulfs is the biggest question mark not having wrestled now for over six weeks.

In the Southwest Regional, state qualifiers Silvers and Fisher are very good. Silvers, in fact, should place at Columbus and Fisher certainly has a chance. The quality drops off quickly after those two, however, and Cunningham leads the rest of a not terribly strong pack.

Again the Tri-Valley is a question mark. I've rated Young, Bell, and Mizer as the top trio, but the DeSales District champ, whoever he may be, will certainly be a strong challenger. I look for Skelton (Coshocton) to be a surprise in this regional moving ahead late in the year to challenge my top three.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: CHRIS MENCHACA (WAUSEON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Piper (Ottawa-Glandorf)
3. Outward (Martins Ferry)
4. Baum (Urbana)
5. McCumber (Rossford)
5. Cash (Little Miami)
6. Hatfield (Willard)
6. Wright (Mason)
9. Carskadden (Marion Pleasant)

10. Hotopp (Dayton Northridge)
11. Chaddock (Minerva)
12. Fugate (West Jefferson)
13. Mendicino (Fairview)
14. Waters (Eastwood)
15. Crockett (Indian Lake)
16. Heavilin (Cadiz)
17. Cardaman (Kenston)

One of the best weight classes in AA--not so much because of two or three superstars, but because of the phenomenal depth exhibited here.

That depth is particularly apparent at the Fostoria Regional where six exceptional wrestlers vie for four qualifying spots. I've chosen Chris Menchaca to be state champ, but there's a good chance that could happen with him finishing fourth in his own district--the wrestlers are that close together there. At any rate, Menchaca placed as a freshman and has not been able to repeat that feat since. He'll be sorely tested by the physical Piper who has had a history of late season defeats. His weak schedule hurts him at regional time. Hatfield and McCumber were 3rd and 4th in the state last year at 98# and they figure to be my other two qualifiers. However, state qualifier Carskadden and the exceptional Waters will also be top-notch competitors. It should be a fabulous competition--so good that you have to wonder if the States will seem almost anti-climatic.

Much the same is true at the Southwest Regional. Baum, 6th last year, and Cash, a two-time qualifier, head the field, but there is tremendous depth to challenge them. State qualifier Wright is still undefeated and Hotopp and Crockett have had outstanding seasons. Donathan (Western Brown), Wick (Springboro), and Hodge (Bethel-Tate) also have a chance. The boys from this regional will be able to challenge the Toledo boys on pretty much an equal footing.

At Tri-Valley, state runner-up Jesse Outward has just returned from a season-long absence with a resounding OVAC win. Sometimes I think it's an advantage to miss a month or so because the boys come back fresher, and many seem to do better at the tournaments because of it. Behind him are Fugate, Heavilin, and state qualifier Goolsby (Hillsboro). None of this latter group is capable of state placement, but they still have the potential to win a state bout.

The Northeast Regional is unexpectedly weak. I've listed the solid Chaddock, the freshman Mendicino, and the enigmatic Cardaman, but there are a number of contenders who are just about as good. I don't often say it, but it looks like this group will be first-round dessert for the rest of the state.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JIM REINDEL (CARDINAL STRITCH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Duermit (Little Miami) | 8. Leibee (South Point) |
| 3. Day (Wauseon) | 9. Lytle (Madeira) |
| 4. Branham (West Jefferson) | 10. Gier (Upper Sandusky) |
| 5. Kosco (Canal Fulton NW) | 11. Bair (Kenston) |
| 6. Gresham (Blanchester) | 12. Volpe (Columbus DeSales) |
| 7. Walton (Taylor) | 13. Doyle (Bellaire) |
| | 14. Ringler (Otsego) |

This is not a weight that is going to inspire a tremendous amount of interest. This is mostly because Jim Reindel will dominate the proceeding, but it also reflects on a generally unknown field present at this weight. Reindel has become one of the premier "AA" wrestlers and, in reality, he should be competing with the likes of Willaman or Fiorenza. As it is, he really shouldn't have much trouble taking the title, and, in fact, I would not be surprised to see him have no close matches in Columbus.

The Fostoria Regional is by far the most difficult one. Day, 5th last year, will join Reindel in competing against state qualifier Volpe, and two newer faces, Gier and Ringler. One of this quintet will be eliminated, and much of that will reflect the pairings.

There are also three state qualifiers in the Southwest Regional headed by Duermit, 5th last year. However, Gresham is unpredictable and Walton has lost several times so it's difficult to say how well this trio will do. On paper at least, it's the second strongest regional this year. Lytle, a pin winner over Walton, could well be the fourth qualifier.

The Northeast is also weak at this weight class. State qualifier Kosco and Zoccole are both up two weight classes from last year when neither came close to winning a bout at States. Bair is something of an unknown quantity, but he was runner-up at the big holiday tournament. Other possibilities include Martin (Elyria Catholic), Kemp (Buckeye) and Hergeshelmer (Crestwood).

Branham heads the Tri-Valley Regional with Leibee and Doyle a large step behind. State qualifiers Werren (Cadiz) and Pryor (Barnesville) will have to do a super job just to qualify again.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMP: PAT FITZGERALD (LITTLE MIAMI)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Penager (Lexington) | 9. Bashor (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 3. Wlodarz (Cardinal Stritch) | 10. Schneider (Beachwood) |
| 4. Kinser (Fairfield Union) | 11. Helton (Middletown Madison) |
| 5. Bodnar (Oak Harbor) | 12. Ciofani (Bellaire) |
| 6. Henry (Versailles) | 13. DeFraine (Olmsted Falls) |
| 7. Bartos (Buckeye) | 14. Ohl (Ontario) |
| 8. Hibbs (Jefferson Union) | 15. Polinsky (St. Clairsville) |

Early in the season I figured that Pat Fitzgerald would run away with this crown--but now I'm not so sure. That change of heart is the result of Fitzgerald's lack of expected dominance and the rapid emergence of Penager and Wlodarz. Still Pat's experience and past record make him a slight favorite. An outstanding summer wrestler, he may have been a little flat at the beginning of the season--although his loss to the excellent but young Hunter has me concerned.

In that Southwest Regional only Henry is close to the same class as Fitzgerald. After these two, the rest of the field is weak and uninspiring. Don't look for the 3rd and 4th place winners in the quarter finals at Columbus.

However, the Fostoria Regional is very strong here--easily the best in the state. Penager was undefeated at 119# last season and a strong state placement candidate when he did a nose dive in the District. This year the compact 126-pounder has had even a better year, and he should be a real threat to Fitzgerald. Wlodarz was 4th at 112# last year, being pinned by Fitzgerald in the consolation finals. That won't happen again this year, and their meeting in March this time might be in the finals. After a slow start, Bodnar has gotten hot and should take the 3rd qualifying spot while the unheralded Bashor will vie with Ohl and Foes (Huron) for the last opening.

State qualifier Kinser heads a representative field at Tri-Valley. Most of his competition will come from along the river in the form of Ciofani, Hibbs and Polinsky. Whether this group is strong enough to do well at States is uncertain.

Finally, the Northeastern District is very weak. It's unlikely that anyone from that area will place--an unusual circumstance. While I've listed Bartos, Schneider and DeFraine, I fully expect to see some upsets and several unfamiliar names on those tickets to St. John's Arena.

PROJECTED CHAMP: BOBBY JONES (ORWELL GRAND VALLEY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Thompson (Kenston) | 8. Kresnye (Kirtland) |
| 3. Savage (Blanchester) | 9. Clark (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 4. Kunar (St. Thomas Aquinas) | 10. Crooks (Martins Ferry) |
| 5. Welch (Norwalk) | 11. Scheall (Streetsboro) |
| 6. Springer (Edison) | 12. Ornouski (Cadiz) |
| 7. Cope (Valley View) | 13. Keiser (Versailles) |
| | 14. Fairbanks (Lakota) |

As weak as the Northeastern District is at 126#, it is strong at 132#. State runner-up Bobby Jones wrestled a great tournament at Columbus last year losing in the finals to the prohibitive favorite Joe Ghezzi in the last seconds 7-6. He had a nightmarish start this year, however, nagged by illness and injuries, and performing well below what he is capable of doing. I expect that to change during tournament time and for Jones to charge to the title. Lacking strong workout partners at Grand Valley and a rigorous schedule, he'll use district and regional competition to prepare for the states.

That regional will be tough. Since dropping to 132#, Thompson has won both the North Canton and Kenston Tournaments in fine style, beating such luminaries as Bubba Strauss. He'll have the advantage of being away from Jones at the regional and state competition and should be a finalist. Behind him are state place-winner Kunar, the mysterious Kresnye, Scheall and, perhaps, Stutz (W. Salem Northwest). Kresnye, a great youth wrestler, has had a fluctuating high school career, but, if healthy, he will be a strong challenger for the last qualifying spot.

In the Southwest Regional, Savage heads a really strong field. Not well known outside his own area, he has strong placement potential. Cope and state qualifier Keiser also seem assured of state berths. After that the field is wide open although I do like Sibcy (Preble-Shawnee).

There is good depth at Fostoria. State qualifier Welch heads that group and his 15-9 loss to Jaeger in the quarter-finals last year showed his ability. This year he has lost to Thompson among my top group. Springer could place, but Clark and Fairbanks will need to be careful just to get to Columbus. Near (SSM) and Garner (Elmwood) are other possibilities.

At Tri-Valley, state qualifiers Crooks and Ornouski head a weak field. It's difficult to see any of this group placing. Hall (Teays Valley) is the best of the rest while the 4th spot is wide open.

PROJECTED CHAMP: PAT HOY (FAIRVIEW PARK)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Patrick (Upper Sandusky)
3. Peters (Cardinal Stritch)
4. Funk (Olmsted Falls)
5. Lamancusa (West Branch)
6. Veler (Oak Harbor)
7. Graziani (Columbus DeSales)
8. Weber (Wauseon)

9. Collica (Twinsburg)
10. Peters (Claymont)
11. Kearney (Springfield NE)
12. Marlowe (South Point)
13. Brown (Manchester)
14. Millison (Ironton)
15. Yost (Dixie)
16. Eramo (Hartley)

A sensationally good weight class that should attract widespread fan attention. This is one of the best and most exciting weights in "AA"--- full of interesting possibilities and contrasting styles. Pat Hoy, the outstanding junior from Fairview Park, is my favorite---although by the narrowest of margins. An exceptional talent, he has had an unblemished season after qualifying at the rugged 126# weight class in "AAA" last year. He has exceptional skills and balance and a mat sense that you just can't teach.

His major competition will come from the Fostoria Regional in the form of Brian Patrick and Aaron Peters. Patrick, a state semi-finalist last year is immensely strong and physical. He lost to Bobby Jones 10-9 in that semi-final and finished 5th, but he showed awesome potential throughout the tourney. Peters is also sensational and has beaten such "AAA" contenders as Sam Dunn of Findlay. He is a key element in the Stritch team plan. If by misfortune Patrick and Hoy are paired together, he could be a finalist. Both he and Patrick are also juniors.

Also at Fostoria is the unpredictable Veler---yet another state qualifier--- whose upper body moves can defeat anyone and the Brecksville champ, junior Luke Graziani. This makes for a quartet of outstanding qualifiers, but leaves out the talented Troy Weber. This boy could qualify anywhere else, but will probably be left out for Columbus because five of my eight top-rated wrestlers are from the Fostoria Regional.

The Northeast Regional has more to offer than just Hoy. State place-winner Funk and "AAA" state qualifier Lamancusa will also emerge from that area, and Collica and Brown are also excellent. Again, we have five outstanding boys with only four spots. There is just no question that both northern regionals are loaded.

That suggests that the other regionals are in for a bad time in Columbus and that should be true. You'd kind of hope that first round action would pit them against the northern regionals, and not against each other. If that happens, there'll be some first round donnybrooks as the Northeast and Fostoria qualifiers bang heads Thursday afternoon.

At any rate, there isn't much to say about the southern regionals since they don't really have much impact on what happens at this weight. State qualifiers Kearney and Marlowe head the two areas while Peters--brother of last year's 145# runner-up--could spring an upset.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMP: GREG GOAD (OAK HARBOR)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. McCormick (Columbus DeSales) | 8. Breeden (Brookside) |
| 3. Quillen (Hartley) | 9. Kozak (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 4. Lance (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 10. Chelikowsky (Circleville) |
| 5. Szabo (Streetsboro) | 11. Brennan (Reading) |
| 6. Messner (West Holmes) | 12. Starkey (Claymont) |
| 7. Buck (Dayton Northridge) | 13. Kowatch (W. Salem Northwestern) |
| | 14. Mazeroski (Cadiz) |

Greg Goad, only a junior, is one of the best wrestlers in the state. Something of a prodigy, he was state runner-up as a freshman and state champ last year at a most difficult weight class. His overtime win over Corrigan last year was a classic, and this year he has dominated everyone he has met. He moved over the summer to the Oak Harbor district--how's that for a move-in--and he immediately boosted their team into a top five contender.

The only wrestler who could upset him is the brilliant sophomore Tony McCormick. An exceptional upper-body wrestler, McCormick was 2nd at the tough Brecksville Tourney and dominated outstanding seniors until the final round. He will be a state champion in Ohio--but not this year. Since these two are in the same regional, they will be paired apart at Columbus.

The rest of the field pales in comparison with these two, although it contains the defending "A" champ, Mitch Lance. A tireless worker, Lance, nevertheless, won't be able to keep up with Goad and McCormick. However, he will head the Northeast District which also features the very tough Szabo, state qualifier Breeden and the long-shot Kowatch. This is a solid group which should place at least two qualifiers. Other possibilities are Brockway (Berkshire) and Smith (Elyria Catholic).

With Goad and McCormick at Fostoria, two qualifying spots are closed. That's probably just as well as the rest of the field isn't that strong anyway. Kozak lost 13-12 to Veler and has done well otherwise so he looks like a solid candidate for a ticket to Columbus, but the last berth is wide open.

The Southwest is again very weak with Buck and Brennan my two leading candidates. Frankly, I don't think it makes a whole lot of difference who emerges from that area because of the upstate competition.

The Tri-Valley Regional is very solid. It features two-time state qualifier Messner and state qualifiers Chelikowski, Starkey and Quillen. I particularly like the latter boy, and he should wrestle Lance in the consolation finals. Messner also is in the hunt for a low place. Mazeroski is also rated from this area, but a serious knee injury has reduced his chances

of jumping by one of the state qualifiers. If healthy, though, he would be a formidable obstacle.

155#

PROJECTED CHAMP: PAUL MAYNARD (MARION PLEASANT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Blasiolo (Streetsboro)
3. Cain (Manchester)
4. Adkinson (Teays Valley)
5. Grilliot (Milton-Union)
6. Lane (Wauseon)
7. Kaplow (Orange)
8. Chapman (South Point)

9. Gareau (Olmsted Fall)
10. Hilton (Martins Ferry)
11. Poteet (Reading)
12. Field (Edison)
13. Hardrick (Aviation)
14. Hanchin (Perkins)
15. Cruse (Taylor)

Maynard is a very tough, if unpredictable, competitor. He was sixth last year at Columbus losing to the eventual champion Dave Mariola by two points in the first round. There is no doubt that he possesses the skills and strengths to win the title, but I am concerned about consistency and concentration.

Maynard will exit the Fostoria Regional which also contains Lane, Field and Hanchin. There isn't a lot of depth at this weight so this trio should do very well. Leeth (Upper Sandusky) is one competitor who could pull the big upset.

The Northeastern Regional is particularly well stocked at this weight and it is from this direction that Maynard need be wary. Blasiolo lost a rugged 7-5 bout in the state quarter-finals last year and was eliminated. He deserved to place and he should do so easily this year. While Maynard scores a lot of points, many of Blasiolo's matches are low-scoring affairs where the initial takedown is crucial. Cain was 5th last year at 145# losing to Goad by only two points. Depending on the pairings, he could easily be a finalist, and he has always been tough in the last round of tournaments. Both these boys are outstanding, but there's more. Gareau is yet another, state qualifier while Kaplow has had an outstanding '83-'84 season. They would be my favorites for the last two state berths. However, there are two other considerations. One is Kenya Hardrick, the only wrestler at Aviation High School, but a first-rate performer. He works out with the Collinwood team, but clearly this is not an ideal situation. He is an explosive performer capable of upsetting anyone. The other factor, Frank Crognale (West Branch), who has wrestled extremely well lately and who could become a force at this regional.

In the Southwest, Grilliot stands far above the rest. He should dominate until he begins to hit the really good boys, and then he'll stay close. Poteet, Cruse and possibly Wittman (Madeira) are my other qualifying candidates.

Finally, the Tri-Valley Regional is, as is often the case, fraught with the unknown. Adkinson is a quality performer who should place in Columbus. Chapman, 6th last year, is solid, but I had thoughts of rating Hilton ahead of him. That's because the latter wrestler has had a big year including

a perfect season and large number of falls and superior decisions. Schram (Bellaire) and Sawka (Jefferson Union) are also highly rated along the River, but I suspect a Columbus area performer will snatch that fourth spot.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JOHN HUBER (W. SALEM NORTHWEST)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Stover (Willard)
3. Kikume (Apple Creek Waynedale)
4. London (Sand. St. Mary)
5. Kesterman (Taylor)
6. Miller (Philo)
7. Rini (Aurora)
8. Collica (Twinsburg)

9. Current (Steubenville)
10. Yackee (Wauseon)
11. McGlone (Marysville)
12. Elswick (Ironton)
13. Bennett (Streetsboro)
14. Marke (Cadiz)
15. Ambrose (Granville)
16. Anstenis (Madeira)

The way this report is constructed centers around writing 39 short reports (one for each weight class) over a five or six-day period. There is no reason to write them in any particular order so I start first with those that seem easiest--like ones that contain names such as Heffernan or Willaman or Goad. This gives me more time to collect information on the more difficult weights hoping something will happen that will make the rankings clearer. Gradually they all get done until I'm left with the single most difficult case--and this is it.

I have no idea who will win this championship. My choice, though, is John Huber and if he should actually win the title, I'll be immensely pleased. He does have solid credentials as a state qualifier at 145# last year, and is an extremely productive wrestler this current season. Clearly a major drawback is less opportunity to wrestle top-flight opponents on a consistent basis because West Liberty Salem doesn't make the schedule of a lot of well known schools.

Kikume, a Medina Tourney champ, is another strong competitor in this weight class. Hailing from Apple Creek Waynedale, his only loss was to Huber. It would be great if these two little-known schools were to produce the finalists in Columbus. The Northeastern District is particularly strong featuring not only Huber and Kikume, but also Rini, Collica and Bennett. This tough trio will test my top choices, and be difficult to beat in Columbus. Also on hand will be Sciuva (Orange), the upset pin-winner over Pat Renz at the Richmond Hts. Tourney, Zody (Triway) and Dieckman (Olmsted Falls). Easily the best regional at this weight.

Close behind is the Fostoria Regional with Stover, London, Yackee and McGlone as favorites. While reasonably strong, this group does not really compare in overall quality with the Northeast contingent--with the exception of the unbeaten Stover. Schmidt (Coldwater) and Donaldson (Elmwood) are also good, and this latter boy, in particular, could upset one of my ranked wrestlers.

At Tri-Valley, Miller and Current should lead the way. Both were disappointed last year in qualifying attempts, but should come on strong this time. Elswick has been injured so he may be vulnerable to challenges by Marke and Ambrose. It will be interesting to see how this group fares against what I perceive as the generally better boys from the North.

The Southwest is very weak with the exception of Kesterman. If he should falter, nobody from this area will place. King (Reading) along with Anstenis trail him.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: TODD COULTER (WHITEHALL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Stratton (Aurora)
3. Burkett (Blanchester)
4. Daiber (Cardinal Stritch)
5. Raiff (Dayton Chaminade)
6. Williams (Perkins)
7. Wearsch (Wellington)
8. Young (Steubenville)
9. Johantges (Reading)
10. Cooper (Bryan)
11. Schacterle (Delta)

A weight class that suffers from a lack of depth. The top boys are good-particularly Coulter and Stratton--but there just don't seem to be that many challengers.

Coulter, a Junior, and Young, a sophomore, look like the two strongest candidates at Tri-Valley. While I have no doubts about Coulter, the jury is still out on how well Young will do at regional and state competition. Galbraith (West Holmes) and Potts (Hannibal River) are potential challengers, but I suspect that Columbus area wrestlers like Alvarez (Marysville) will qualify.

The Southwest area is relatively strong. Both Burkett and Raiff are potential state place-winners and Johantges and Hatfield (Dayton Northridge) look solid. This is one weight where the regional will do a lot of winning.

On the other hand, the Northeast Regional is very weak after Stratton. Wearsch has done a good job this year, but there just aren't any other reasonable possibilities. I keep thinking that, perhaps, some of the excess 167's ought to consider moving up eight pounds.

Daiber and Williams lead a not-so-strong Fostoria Regional. However, there are a number of potential contenders. I've rated two others and could add people like Taylor (Lexington) to the list.

PROJECTED CHAMP: JOHN ISHMAEL (OAK HARBOR)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Keenan (Steubenville)
3. Leeder (Orrville)
4. Baker (Bellbrook)
5. Michael (Marysville)
6. Cameron (Brookville)
7. Oberstar (Painesville Harvey)
8. May (Upper Sandusky)
9. Mayer (Reading)
10. Bluhn (Teays Valley)
11. Blum (Granville)
12. Recknagel (Rossford)
13. DeWitt (Ravenna Southeast)
14. Mullins (Dixie)

A real solid weight class that should be a pleasure to watch. John Ishmael was my pick at 175# last year after a great sophomore year at 185#. I suspect that the twin pressures of weight and performance wore on him. This year, at the more natural 185#, he should win the title with margin to spare. It won't necessarily be easy, but I don't foresee overtime struggles either.

Ishmael regional is clearly the strongest. The slimmed-down heavyweight, Michael, and the resurgent May are my next two choices there while Recknagel and Hulss (Columbus DeSales) will battle for the last qualifying spot. Two or three representatives of this regional could place.

Charlie Keenan, the fabulous Steubenville junior, is becoming a legend down along the Ohio/West Virginia border. Last year, I pointed out this phenomenon as a question mark in state competition, but he qualified and won a bout before being eliminated in the quarter-finals. This year, he is again 17-0, OVAC champ, and the pin leader in the area. Great with the legs, he'll be very difficult to handle. The combination of Bluhn and Blum back up Keenan with McCrary (Washington Court House) a long-shot possibility.

In the Southwest, Baker is a returning state qualifier whose first round loss to Leeder was by a single point. Cameron, Mayer, and Mullins are my three other choices and they are a representative group at this weight.

You don't get many underclassmen qualifying for Columbus at the upper weights. That's why it was so surprising to see freshman Jack Leeder make it at 175# last year--and even win a bout. This year, this fine sophomore should lead the Northeastern contingent to Columbus. If he remains healthy and interested, he and Keenan will dominate next year. Painesville Harvey has had a couple of miserable seasons recently, but Oberstar is really a guiding light for this team and his early season injury kind of hid him from view. He is, however, a fine 185# and should easily qualify for state competition. The only thing that worries me is his lack of strong competition, and the many forfeits he has received since his return. He could be a victim of a district upset before he gets the rust shaken off. DeWitt seems an obvious third choice, but he does seem prone to upset. An important contestant from a team perspective might be Dorsey (Streetsboro) whose qualification could have the potential to boost that team up several places.

PROJECTED CHAMP: DEMORRIS McDONALD (PERKINS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Davis (Ravenna Southeast) | 8. Keister (Akron St. Vincent) |
| 3. Moxley (Barnesville) | 9. Allison (Fairfield Union) |
| 4. Hoehn (Ottawa-Guandorf) | 10. McLain (Jefferson Union) |
| 5. Lacher (Minerva) | 11. Rowe (Columbus DeSales) |
| 6. Stephens (Willard) | 12. Kiko (St. Thomas Aquinas) |
| 7. Dudley (Loveland-Hurst) | 13. Alig (Coldwater) |

Unlike the situation in "AAA," this is a solid experienced weight class with plenty of potential for fireworks. DeMorris McDonald, 2nd last year, is the obvious choice, but the last few years have certainly proved that there are no sure things at this weight class. McDonald had a close first-round bout with Davis last year, lost in both district and state finals last year, and lost to DiEsposito this year so he can be beaten. The key to that will be constant, unrelenting pressure.

The Fostoria Regional is exceptional. Besides McDonald, there is the powerful Hoehn, two-time state qualifier Roger Stephens, and Rowe. I really like the aggressive Hoehn, but he has to overcome a weak schedule and lots of inaction due to forfeits. Rowe has been out most of the year, but he is tough to beat. Keith Stevens (Edison), Thomas (Van Wert), and particularly Alig will be shut out unless they can manage an upset. Alig might be the perpetrator of just such an outcome.

The huge Moxley, now a junior, is an outstanding long-term prospect. Brother of Ohio State's nationally ranked heavyweight, he is far ahead of him at equivalent points in time. He is also about 6'5", 270# and can move. He pinned through the OVAC almost all in the first period. He stands far ahead of Allison and McLain is his strongest competition here.

The Northeast area also is strong. Davis and Lacher were state qualifiers last year, and have done well in 1983-84. Davis, in particular, is an excellent candidate to upset McDonald. Keister is a very large heavyweight who upset Dunn of St. Edwards at North Canton and dragged Datkuliak into overtime. He cannot be trifled with. Kiko is a very small heavyweight whose lightning quickness has resulted in about an 80% pin ratio.

The Southwest Regional is dominated by Dudley. A state qualifier last year, he faces little real competition in his own area. Cox (CNE), Boyd (Brookville), Gephart (Middletown Madison) and Gibson (Deer Park) are some names you could see in Columbus--but not for long.

TEAMS

1. Cardinal Stritch -- A school that was extremely strong last year--and despite my forecast of a championship--finished a close second. This year, they are not nearly so tough, but they face much easier competition. Reindel is an almost sure champ while Wlodarz and Peters should be in the top three. If Kozak or Daiber can score at the state level, it may be just enough. Since this team and DeSales are in the same regional, they won't meet head-to-head that often in Columbus, so they can most damage each other at that qualifying level.
2. Columbus DeSales -- A team that is much better than originally forecast. Marinelli should win and McCormick has the look of a finalist--especially since he'll be away from Goad. A key will be Graziani's performance at the murderous 138# class. If he can place and Rowe can win a couple of bouts, that might be enough to take another team title. Volpe and Huiss could also be big helps.
3. Oak Harbor -- A pair of state champs in Ishmael and Goad score a lot of team points. If the erratic Veler has a hot weekend--again at the 138# class--this team might be able to eke out the team title. Again, they are in the same regional as Stritch and DeSales--so a lot could get decided a week early. Also 138# is the key weight with Peters and Graziani matching with Veler. Wauseon, ranked 5th, is also at Fostoria and a key for them is Troy Weber--at 138#.
4. Streetsboro -- A solid squad that really doesn't have the great individual talent. Still Blaside, Szabo, and Purcell should do well and, if they can, just qualify Bennett and Scheall, things could go very well indeed.
5. Wauseon -- The fourth Fostoria Regional team in the top five. Menchaca, Day, and Lane are their best bets, but they need help from Yackee, Weber, and Riley. Day has not wrestled real well this year, and they need to get him on track.
6. Kenston -- Tatonetti and Thompson are their only sure qualifiers. Both should be finalists and then it's up to the erratic Cardaman, Bair, Withem and Bogardus, a team that always does well until about 2nd round of regionals.
7. Steubenville -- This is really unprecedented in expecting them to do this well. Teams from that area generally do poorly at Columbus. The junior Keenan and sophomore Young are both undefeated and Current and the smaller Young are also tough. They need to get Dalbenzio or McDonald going to really do well.
8. Little Miami -- It all happens for them between 112# and 126#. Cash, Duermit, and particularly Fitzgerald carry the burden. However, three state winners score a lot of points.

9. Olmsted Falls -- State place-winners Theriot and Funk lead the way--but Funk is at the murderous 138# class. DeFraine and Gareau are also tough, but one more qualifier would help.
10. Upper Sandusky -- A rapidly improving squad that has risen quickly in the past couple of years. Patrick--at 138#--is their key performer, but May, Gier, and Leeth could help.

"A"

The new regional format probably will not help "A" wrestling in the long run. Combining the powerful Cleveland schools with the still emerging small schools in the Eastern District is liable to choke off the growth of the sport in those areas. After all they were at least guaranteed one state berth in the old format, and it was an incentive that sparked real interest. Now they'll be fortunate to send five wrestlers to the state tourney. The same holds true in the combination of the powerful Central District and the still burgeoning Southwest. What it will do is consolidate "A" strength in still fewer schools-- a trend that has been all too apparent in the past.

In addition, I hope real thought has been given to the pairings in the "A" regional format. In some areas, three district champs will funnel into one regional. How will that be fairly handled when only two wrestlers will qualify? In such cases a wrestle-off for true second can be the only fair qualification procedure, but, again, many administrators seem unaware of that fact. In the past, matches were forfeited because 4th place drew away from the champ at the regional in normal eight-man bracketing. Soon double forfeits were occurring until a better procedure was developed in the Northeastern District. Has that been worked out in the Northwestern District where both regionals will face that problem? I hope so since the State Tournament has come to mean so much to the average competitor and qualification needs to be done in the fairest possible manner.

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: DANNY HANSON (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Neikirk (Cardinal) | 7. Peters (Arcadia) |
| 3. Marczika (Bishop Ready) | 8. Rowe (Edgerton) |
| 4. Lieb (Black River) | 9. Bonaventura (Grandview) |
| 5. Hotz (Fremont St. Joe) | 10. Horner (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 6. Howard (New Albany) | 11. Jorkos (Ayresville) |

The two little East Surburban Conference stars--Hanson and Neikirk--should dominate this weight class at Columbus. Hanson was most impressive at the Brecksville Tourney and the freshman from Richmond Hts. should edge out Neikirk at district, regional and state competition. Hanson is quick and agile and his three losses have simply occurred when he has been overpowered by older boys-- and I don't see that happening in "A" competition. While such speculation is clearly premature, it's interesting to consider the possibility of Hanson winning this year and following up with three more titles. Combined with three titles by brother Jimmy and two by brother Timmy, that would give the Hansons nine state titles--one more than the Jordans' record of eight. Like I said, it's a little early to speculate. Others in the Louisville Regional are the solid Lieb and Pearl (Columbia), but they are doomed to disappointment this year. Lieb, in particular, could probably qualify out of any other regional

except this one. Another tough, little 98-pounder is Kinnemond (Shadyside) who might have qualified under last year's format, but has no chance to do so this year.

The two Northwest regionals are mainly populated by unknown quantities. Hotz, the Outstanding Wrestler at the Van Buren Tourney is the best chance for a place from that area. Peters, the Findlay Classic Champ, has some solid experience and could also place if things went perfectly. Jorkos and Rowe look like other possible qualifiers although those spots are truly wide open this year.

At the Washington Regional the Columbus schools should dominate. Marczika is the best in that area and could garner a low place at States. I like Howard to beat Bonaventura for the second qualifying place, but it should be close.

While 98# should be a competitive weight class, it does not have the depth of previous years nor superstars like Kasser, Adkins, or Woodland. That's why we'll see underclassmen dominate.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMP: CURT HAYWOOD (LICKING HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Loza (Cardinal)
3. McCullough (McComb)
4. Wise (Monroeville)
5. Krupp (Springfield C.C.)
6. Ebling (Fremont St. Joe)
7. Sarver (Bishop Ready)
8. Giesige (Columbus Grove)
9. Hartshorn (Ledgemont)
10. Neinberg (Blufton)
11. Hershey (Black River)
12. Anderson (Hopewell-Loudon)

Haywood is another in the long line of fine Licking Hts. products. While not a sure thing, he comes very close to that level. Haywood has wrestled a rigorous schedule in a flawless manner including the championship at the huge Medina Tourney. The only possibility for defeat, in my judgment, looms in the person of Ryan Loza, third last year at 98#. Still I would rate Loza's chances at something less than 20 percent although the possibility certainly exists.

Haywood should be joined out of his regional by either state qualifier Krupp or Sarver. Neither would have much chance for potential placement. While Krupp has more experience, Sarver may easily pull the upset because the strong Bishop Ready schedule better prepares for regional and state competition.

In the Louisville Regional, Loza should dominate but the second spot is wide open. Certainly, Hartshorn has to be a slim favorite, but Hershey has had a strong year. It is likely that somebody with a "hot hand" at the regional could knock off both of my runner-up choices.

McCullough is the class of the Defiance Regional, and, in fact, the entire northwest. He has to hope that Haywood and Loza get paired together so that he can tiptoe into the finals. He'll surely do better than the total of 45 seconds he wrestled in last year's state meet. The two northwestern regionals are unbalanced with the Defiance competition very much the stronger. Besides McCullough it features Giesige, Neinberg, plus some other capable 105's.

At Bellevue, the relatively untested Wise meets pretty much lackluster competition. His biggest threat will be Ebling, but it wouldn't surprise me if at least one unknown became part of the qualifying tandem.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: RUSTY WEINER (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Frank (Stryker) | 7. Grogan/DiFranco (Ledgement) |
| 3. Thiel (Edgerton) | 8. Furman (Jamestown Greeneview) |
| 4. Stewart (Bridgeport) | 9. Green (Columbiana) |
| 5. Adkins (Richmond Hts.) | 10. Bockey (Spencerville) |
| 6. Reed (Gibsonburg) | 11. Smith (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| | 12. Ramsey (Fisher Catholic) |

This is another weak weight class burdened with a number of question mark wrestlers. There are only two returning state qualifiers, and both have had some trouble moving up two weight classes from 98#. I believe that the competition will be wide open both at the regional and state level, and that upsets will almost become the norm.

I've selected Weiner because of his solid successes against "AA" and "AAA" competition. A first year varsity wrestler for Ready, there certainly has to be some consideration given to his lack of experience. The big plus, though, is the great workout partners he has had at Ready, and their past record at developing lower weight wrestlers. Give a tentative nod in his direction.

Frank has had a tremendous pinning record the last two years--many of them in the first period. Still at last year's district as a qualifying favorite, he got decked in 56 seconds in the first round and never recovered. This year state runner-up Thiel--rated just below him--lasted only 94 seconds with him and he has crushed virtually every opponent in that same manner. I'm not sure what to expect this year. Thiel should join him from the Defiance regional as the long, very slender sophomore begins to grow into his body. Bockey and Westrick (Ayersville) should be other threats from that regional, although Wilson (Lincolnview) and Rumer (Blufton) are also good.

The Bellevue regional is again fairly weak. Reed and Smith--the two I've chosen to rank--are pretty much guesses, although Reed was a District fourth last year. Look for somebody, perhaps Lupica (Fremont St. Joe) to take out Smith in this area.

It's the Louisville Regional where some real questions will be answered. It could be a critical weight in the Ledgement/Richmond Hts. team contest and it's hard to decipher. Adkins is exceptionally erratic and you never know what he'll do. My grandmother could cradle him, but he never quits fighting. Who can say what he'll do against suspect quantities like Grogan or Stewart. Grogan has never done really well in big matches while state qualifier Stewart is up two weight classes. Even Green has a real chance of qualifying when all is said and done. At any rate, whichever two qualify could place at this weight in Columbus. Another element might be DiFranco (Ledgement), a precocious freshman, with tremendous talent. He could possibly knock Grogan off the team and further confuse the issue.

PROJECTED CHAMP: BRIAN RADER (McCOMB)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Gischler (Licking Hts.) | 8. Swint (Fremont St. Joe) |
| 3. Bonaventura (Grandview) | 9. Kern (Waterford) |
| 4. Herman (Edgerton) | 10. Speelman (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| 5. DiSabato (Bishop Ready) | 11. Stallings (Seneca East) |
| 6. Arrigoni (Newbury) | 12. Falk (Cory-Rawson) |
| 7. Dingers (Ledgemont) | 13. Moeglin (Malvern) |

This is probably the most unusual ranking I've ever made. I have two former state champs ranked 5th and 6th, a state runner-up rated 4th, a state placewinner 7th, and two state qualifiers 9th and 10th. This is a weight with good depth and very freaky circumstances. It is also a class where the pairings at both regionals and states will mean everything.

State qualifier Rader has had a great year. He bombed Herman 10-1 at the Findlay Classic and has pretty much "laid waste to the countryside." He has gone from a conservative wrestler to one who aggressively attacks. It's made all the difference as he has been overwhelming. State runner-up Herman still has that hellacious cradle, but four years on the varsity may have dulled slightly his enthusiasm. However, he should still nab the second qualifying spot at Defiance. The improving Falk still can't compete with the above quality, and will be left behind.

The Washington Regional will be spectacular. State champion DiSabato will have trouble even qualifying for Columbus. Gischler and Bonaventura have both had exceptional years, and DiSabato had an almost Hollywood freshman year. It'll be interesting to see if he can power his way to Columbus again this year. At any rate, he'll have to wrestle his heart out to beat Gischler and Bonaventura.

At Louisville, former state champion Arrigoni will be sorely tested. Injured most of this year following a disappointing junior year, he'll be looking to regain his 10th grade form. That year, he overwhelmed the field at 105# as one of the biggest kids I've seen at that weight. State 4th place winner Dingers is another who has wrestled sparingly this year while state qualifier Kern will be pressed in his own area by Johnson (Bellaire St. John). The two qualifiers, whoever they are, will have a tough time placing.

At Bellevue, the competition is much weaker. State qualifier Speelman has not had a good year, and the people behind him are unknowns. This group will get chewed up at St. John's Arena.

In summary, this is a strong and very deep weight with a number of imponderables. Foremost will be the qualification process out of Columbus which pits three of my top five contenders in competition for two spots. In addition, it will be interesting to see if Rader can maintain the large edge he now appears to have over the field or whether like last year, that advantage somehow dissipates.

PROJECTED CHAMP: JEFF HOLY (LEDGEMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Watts (Bishop Ready) | 10. Burdette (Gibsonburg) |
| 3. Foston (Bridgeport) | 11. Hammond (Wehrle) |
| 4. Dernlan (W. Liberty Salem) | 12. Lang (Waterford) |
| 5. Gashler (Academy) | 13. Fasig (McComb) |
| 6. Roth (Seneca East) | 14. Kosky (Bellaire St. John) |
| 7. White (Black River) | 15. Knapp (Edgerton) |
| 8. Weickert (Fremont St. Joe) | 16. Mitchell (New London) |
| 9. Wilson (Arcadia) | 17. Little (Williamsburg) |

Without a lot of fanfare or publicity, Jeff Holy has quietly become one of the best "A" wrestlers in the state. He is defending state champ at this weight and should overwhelm most of the challengers trying to take away his title. He gives Ledgemont a solid foundation of state points on which to build. Don't look for any upsets at this weight even though it has a relatively strong field.

That Louisville Regional has three other solid state contenders, but, of course, only one other will make the trip. It's kind of sad that this regional and the one at Washington High School are loaded with eight good kids for four spots while the two Northwestern regionals are relatively weak. Nonetheless, Holy will probably be joined by state alternate Foston whose only loss last year--to two-time state champion Ivan Parrish--eliminated him from that one-man district. However, White is also very good and could grab that second spot. Mark Lang--another from the multiple clans at Waterford--also is a top-flight competitor, and even Kosky has an excellent record.

At the Washington Regional, state qualifier Dernlan will go head-to-head with three of the Columbus area's best 126's--Watts, Gashler, and Hammond. Watts has already beaten Gashler several times the past few years, and has looked very good this season. He should place at the States. That leaves it up to Dernlan vs. Gashler for that second spot with Hammond capable of at least one upset. Again the two qualifiers from this regional should place.

At Bellevue, Roth and state qualifier Weickert head a relatively uninspiring field. Burdette and Mitchell look like the two best for an upset, but none of this group should place.

The level of competition is even lower at the Defiance Regional. Nobody there has state experience and even their past district efforts have not been that great. Dusty Wilson did win the Findlay Classic, however, and Knapp and Fasig both wrestle for contending teams. Still it's hard to see any of this group winning a bout in Columbus. I would have thought Fasig would be tougher this year than he has shown so far--maybe that improvement will be forthcoming during the next six weeks. At any rate, he is my second choice to make Columbus.

PROJECTED CHAMP: TIM WARD (BEALLSVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. MacLellan (Richmond Hts.)
3. Cardaman (Ledgemont)
4. Fenton (Licking Hts.)
5. Barger (Liberty Benton)
6. Tappel (New London)
7. Kieffer (Fostoria St. Wendelin)
8. Block (Academy)

9. Jaworski (Norwalk St. Paul)
10. Sucher (Columbiana)
11. Whitman (Edgerton)
12. Levy (Hicksville)
13. Lile (W. Liberty Salem)
14. Leddick (Seneca East)
15. Simone (Bishop Ready)
16. Miller (Waterford)

An outstanding weight class that has great depth and real star quality. For example, my top three include Ward, a state runner-up, Cardaman, a two-time place winner and MacLellan, a state qualifier. However, there is a problem-- they all exit from the same regional so only two can qualify while one stays home. However, there is an opportunity here when you consider how weak 138# is--so weak that I've had trouble coming up with a projected champ. What needs to be done? Richmond Hts. need do nothing. MacLellan should qualify and they have a four-year varsity performer in Pawlowski who can do well at 138#. However, Ledgemont should seriously consider moving Cardaman up one weight to replace his brother. I think he'll be the odd man out at 132#, but will do real well at 138#.

If they should all compete at 132#, it will be very exciting. Ward beat MacLellan by one point at the States last year, but the chances between them are still about even. MacLellan can be really superior, but he seems to have lapses of concentration that can really hurt. Several times I've seen him lose one bout in a tourney and then quickly lose another one to an inferior opponent. Cardaman is steady, but he hasn't really seemed to get better since the 10th grade. Sucher is a solid competitor who'll have no chance with the all-star lineup.

At the Washington Regional, Fenton should dominate, and, in addition, grab a low place at the States. Block should nail down that second spot, although, Lile and Simone will both challenge him.

The Bellevue Regional is also very strong. Kieffer, Tappel, and Jaworski are just about dead even, and take turns defeating one another. Whoever has the hot weekend will qualify and, perhaps, battle for a low place at Columbus.

At Defiance, we have another well balanced field, but this time I think Barger stands well above Whitman and Levy. Barger doesn't wrestle a very rugged schedule, but districts and regionals should toughen him. He and Fenton are the most logical choices to battle in the consolation finals at Columbus.

PROJECTED CHAMP KIRK STASCHKE (NEW LONDON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Morley (Grandview) | 9. Amburgey (Bishop Ready) |
| 3. Ziessler (Blufton) | 10. Hale (Crestview) |
| 4. Putnam (Columbiana) | 11. Siesel (Seneca East) |
| 5. Kitchen (Edgerton) | 12. Cottrell (Lockland) |
| 6. Jennings (Buckeye North) | 13. Vicars (Libery Center) |
| 7. Pawlowski (Richmond Hts.) | 14. Brown (Carey) |
| 8. Myers (Hopewell-Loudon) | 15. Drewyor (Pioneer North Central) |

This is one of those weight classes you just hate because it's so weak that there's just no one to select. You know whoever you choose will probably end up getting beat in about the second round of district, and the actual champ will be someone that you never dreamed could win.

In any case, my choice is state qualifier Kirk Staschke. Although placing only 3rd at the Findlay Classic, he does have the experience and poise needed to do well when it really counts. His regional will be strong with Myers, the Van Buren champ, Hale, Siesel, Brown and Vicars all doing battle. The outcome will probably hinge on the pairings although I've given Myers the edge because of his consistently strong performances throughout the year.

Morley is the kind of wrestler who could finish second or second last. Still he has good ability and is part of the fine nucleus that should push Grandview into the Top Ten. Amburgey is my second choice at Washington, but, quite frankly, this will not be a strong weight class there. In fact, I may have well over-rated Morley though I am struck by some of the people he has defeated. The undefeated Cottrell is another possibility at this site.

Ziessler is really the boy I wanted to pick, but, somehow, he just doesn't seem ready yet. Perhaps, the next six weeks will make the big difference. A state alternate last year, I really thought he'd be ready for a big year. He was 2nd at the Findlay Classic at 145# and 3rd at Van Buren at 138#. He may be just now getting comfortable with the weight. Kitchen was outstanding at the Findlay Classic, but I keep thinking he's awfully small for this weight. He's my second choice at Defiance. Drewyor has been up-and-down this season and is with Bond (Cory-Rawson) a long-shot to qualify.

The Louisville Regional is very weak. Putnam and state qualifier Jennings lead the way, but I can easily see Pawlowski upsetting one of those. If so, he could place which would be important points for Richmond Hts. Lang and Wallace (Black River) are other contenders with former state qualifier Russo (Cuyahoga Hts.) even further behind. Chris Cardaman (Ledgement) has had some important wins this year, but he lacks the consistency to qualify here.

PROJECTED CHAMP: KEITH KERR (LUTHERAN WEST)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Miller (Shadyside) | 9. Buettner (Delphos St. John) |
| 3. Vanderhorst (Covington) | 10. Bendle (Bergholz Springfield) |
| 4. Putnam (Carey) | 11. Romine (New London) |
| 5. Palinskas (Ledgemont) | 12. White (Caldwell) |
| 6. Duty (Freemont St. Joe) | 13. Loze (Cardinal) |
| 7. Boddy (Newbury) | 14. Thomas (Academy) |
| 8. Rotunda (Grandview) | 15. Montgomery (McComb) |

For some reason, 138# and 145# usually two of the stronger classes are very weak this year. It's a real battle at both weights to find first-rate wrestlers. My choice here is the senior from Lutheran West, Keith Kerr. He was 4th last year at 132#, but has, so far, not had an exceptional season to date. If he wins the title, it will be the result of retaining his poise and taking advantage of the mistakes of others.

His regional will probably be stronger and have more depth than the state competition. Rated right behind is the absolutely unknown Miller--undefeated this year--and a district finals overtime loser to state runner-up Damian Lang last year. Of course, the obscurity of his opponents make him something of a question mark. He'll have to do well to beat back the challenges of Cardinal champ Palinskas and the persistent Boddy. Behind them are Bendle, White, and Loze--any of whom is capable of a surprising upset. Teeple (Hillsdale) was 4th at this weight last year, and certainly would be a complicating factor if he competed. However, it's my understanding that a badly broken arm has shelved him for the season. His healthy reappearance would rank him in the top three.

At the Washington Regional, the field is much thinner. State qualifier Vanderhorst and Rotunda should be the qualification favorites with Thomas and Field (Cincinnati County Day) as potential candidates. These qualifiers should do reasonably well at Columbus.

The Bellevue Regional features some new faces. Putnam, Duty, and Romine are probably the three best 145's in the Northwest but, unfortunately, all will exit from this one regional. It very likely will be a question of pairings. Duty and Putnam are in the same district and so the winner of that final will be away from Romine (assuming he wins his district). It will be a strong incentive to take that district crown.

The Defiance Regional is really weak. Nobody here will do anything at the state level. Buettner and Montgomery are the two I chose to rank, but only the former has done much this year. There is an opportunity here for somebody to win a trip to Columbus by having a solid regional weekend.

PROJECTED CHAMP: FRANK MCKEON (LEDGEMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Twiss (Bishop Ready) | 8. Hathaway (Woodmore) |
| 3. Lora (McComb) | 9. Stacklin (Seneca East) |
| 4. Kelly (Richmond Hts.) | 10. Deffenbaugh (Delphos St. John) |
| 5. Osterland (New London) | 11. Flutey (Licking Hts.) |
| 6. Schneider (Woodridge) | 12. Metzger (Fenwick) |
| 7. Abbott (Northwood) | 13. Wilkos (Caldwell) |
| | 14. Geesey (Montpelier) |

This is a fine weight class with both individual stars and good depth. I've chosen Frank McKeon to repeat as state champion at this weight, but it won't be easy. He'll face good competition from every area of the state-- especially his own regional. However, McKeon defeated Suszek three weekends in a row last year so he can handle the pressure. He and Holy must win if Ledgemont is to have a shot at overtaking Richmond Hts. Not coincidentally, one of his stiffest challenges will come from a Richmond Hts. wrestler, Dennis Kelly. A state qualifier last year at 175#, Kelly is now wrestling at a more natural weight. Certainly a problem he'll have is overcoming a nearly two-month absence from the line-up due to injury. Schneider, dropping from "AA" competition, will also be in the picture as will Peters (Cardinal), Chase (Cuyahoga Hts.) and Wilkos. It's the best and deepest regional.

At the Washington Regional, the rapidly improving Twiss should win easily. Flutey, Metzger, and Martin, if at this weight, will all vie for the second qualifying spot. Staying away from Twiss will be the key to that endeavor. Twiss will have to wrestle well at Columbus because Lora and Kelly are right behind him. Jeff Lookabaugh would have been a strong contender at this regional, but the Dayton Christian senior moved to Virginia this past summer.

Lora should dominate the Defiance Regional since most of the best competition is at Bellevue. He is a rugged kid who could well become a finalist although I don't believe he can beat McKeon. Still, look for good things from him. Deffenbaugh was one bout from Columbus last year and should prevail for a Columbus ticket this year. He cannot "go" with Lora, however. Geesey might be a long-shot to upset Deffenbaugh.

The Bellevue Regional is loaded. State qualifiers Hathaway and Abbott, state alternate Osterland, and dark horses Gedart (Fremont St. Joe) and Stacklin are all looking for a finalist spot and a trip to Columbus. I see Abbott and Osterland keeping Hathaway home this year with the two dark-horses unable to keep up. However, Osterland has been erratic in the past and he is the "soft" spot in this prediction. Stacklin could be the surprise and qualify.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: BOB SUSZEK (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Whisler (Crestview)
3. Giesler (Woodmore)
4. Kingrey (Covington)
5. M. McKeon (Ledgemont)
6. Hoskins (Liberty Center)
7. Edwards (Blufton)

8. Martin (Wehrle)
9. Lukas (Cardinal)
10. Belknap (Northwood)
11. Lombardi (Bishop Ready)
12. Bonifas (Delphos St. John)
13. Wittenmyer (Liberty-Benton)

A relatively weak weight that the resurgent Suszek should dominate. He has really wrestled well this year, and if his knee holds together he should win by a solid margin. The grueling "AAA" schedule he has wrestled should have him well prepared for Columbus. Important team considerations will be involved in the fight for the second Louisville qualifying berth. McKeon is the favorite although Lukas and Richards (Bergholz Springfield) will be strong competition.

The Bellevue Regional is loaded. Whisler, just down from 167#, is very good, but he may not withstand the challenge of state qualifier Giesler. Hoskins and Belknap are two other top-flight contenders at this site, although I don't look for either of them to upset my top two picks here.

Kingrey won probably the most exciting state bout last year by struggling to an 18-18, 7-6 OT first-round decision that catapulted him to a fourth place finish. He will battle with Martin and Lombardi for the two available berths.

At Defiance the competition is quite weak. No one besides Edwards has shown much real ability, and even he is suspect. Lugo (Stryker) would have been my second choice earlier in the season, but Bonifas and Wittenmyer are both marginally better now. This area's representatives are likely to be overwhelmed at Columbus.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: BOB POTOVAR (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

2. Peters (Cardinal)
3. Fitzcharles (Edgerton)
4. Schell (Bishop Ready)
5. Rufenacht (Archbold)
6. Gregory (Northwood)
7. Edgington (Ledgemont)

8. Wilson (Lincolnview)
9. Nice (Bergholz Springfield)
10. Kroeger (Delphos St. John)
11. Karr (Lockland)
12. Fournier (Fostoria St. Wendelin)
13. Collum (Woodmore)

Defending state champion Bobby Potokar should have no problems cruising to his second consecutive state crown. His only losses have been to excellent "AAA" wrestlers, and even those have a hint of controversy because of stalling calls. It does suggest to me, however, that Potokar has to look more aggressive in close matches and that he has, I think, a tendency to relax slightly with a big lead. Those problems are not likely to be critical in the tournament process.

The second Louisville qualifying spot could have great impact on the team competition. Peters is the favorite right now, but his own teammate Detweiler could be wrestling at that weight. In addition, Edgington is only a couple of points behind Peters and could nab that second opening. Bergholz Springfield always has a couple of fine wrestlers and Nice is probably their best this year. He'll certainly be an underdog to qualify, but stranger things have happened.

Fitzcharles is improving in "leaps and bounds," and he could well be Potokar's biggest challenge by March. He had four first-period pins at the Findlay Classic, and swept through the Panther Invitational. He will dominate the Defiance Regional and could vault to the runner-up spot at Columbus with continued improvement. There'll be a battle royal for the other spot with Rufenacht, Wilson, and Kroeger all possessing good credentials. Wilson was a state qualifier last year while Rufenacht has wrestled brilliantly so far this year. Again it will be most interesting to see the final outcome here. This is an exceptionally strong regional.

At the Washington Regional, things aren't quite so exciting. Schell is the only good 175-pounder in Columbus and the Southwest area is dominated by Karr. By year's end, Schell could capture a low place at the state meet.

The Bellevue Regional is again the weakest in the state. All I see is first round losers at Columbus no matter who eventually qualifies. My top three are Gregory, Fournier and Collum, but they shouldn't rest secure on that analysis. I'm convinced that others will probably come to the forefront in early March. I just wish I knew who they are going to be.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JAY LEPPELMEIER (EDGERTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Buscemi (Grandview) | 9. Loveland (Ledgemont) |
| 3. Tatonetti (Cardinal) | 10. Andy (Licking Hts.) |
| 4. Sousa (New London) | 11. Knowles (Springfield C.C.) |
| 5. Vonderwell (Delphos St. John) | 12. Straley (New Baltimore) |
| 6. Philipps (Waterford) | 13. Whitney (Liberty Center) |
| 7. Kepus (Woodmore) | 14. Matta (Bergholz Springfield) |
| 8. O'Keefe (Lincolnview) | 15. Hutchinson (Montpelier) |

This is not a weight class populated by very many good wrestlers. There are no real stars and most of the names above are just slightly better than average wrestlers. It's also the "A" weight class with my longest consecutive string of winners--six years. I'm hoping Leppelmeier can keep that record intact by wrestling up to his full potential. He was 4th in the state last year and has been excellent so far this season. He and Fitzcharles at 175# for Edgerton could score a lot of team points for the school with advancements and falls.

Leppelmeier pinned Vonderwell for the third and last state qualifying spot last year, and did so again this year to win the Findlay Classic. Still Vonderwell remains his principal competition at Defiance with O'Keefe a step behind. Further behind, but still dangerous are Straley and Hutchinson. Both qualifiers, whoever they are, will do well in Columbus.

Buscemi heads a weak crew at the Washington Regional. A state alternate last year, Buscemi would have serious problems in "AA" or "AAA" competition, but should do very well in "A". He towers above such second-spot hopefuls like Andy, Knowles, and Posey (Williamsburg). The second qualifier won't win a bout in Columbus.

Tatonetti qualified for States last year at heavyweight, but has moved down--and wisely so. Loushin and McGovern would shut him out of a qualifying spot at heavyweight. The broad geographical area covered by the Louisville Regional is very evident here. Beside Tatonetti we have contenders from along the river all the way up to Geauga County. I believe state qualifier Philipps and Loveland will battle it out for that second spot with Matta several steps behind. Loveland replaces state qualifier Criss who graduated early for Ledgement and he would help in the team competition at Columbus--if he can get there. The raw-boned Philipps, however, stands directly in his path.

At Bellevue a three-way competition should ensue between perennial hopeful Sousa, a state alternate last year, Kepus, and Whitney. I favor the first two. It'll be interesting to see how Sousa, a star at New London since his freshman year, can do at the state meet. He is the last of New London's stable of great big men that included Wycoff, Puder, and Scheerer.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMP: DENNIS LOUSHIN (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Happ (Bishop Ready) | 7. Bloomfield (Seneca East) |
| 3. Steele (Columbus Grove) | 8. Moon (Northwood) |
| 4. McGovern (Ledgement) | 9. Bryant (Lockland) |
| 5. Baker (Fostoria St. Wendelin) | 10. Phelps (Grandview) |
| 6. Damschroeder (Woodmore) | 11. Lora (McComb) |

This is strictly a two-man contest with nobody else within 10 points of Loushin and Happ. It should be a titanic struggle, and one can only hope that it will take place in the finals. This is one of those times when you'd like to see the human element come into play in the pairings. I favor Loushin, but only by the smallest of margins. I think he wrestles a tougher schedule and has better workout partners. Also he might be coming into the States in slightly better shape because Happ has been nagged by injuries. Happ might be a little more powerful, but Loushin is a little slicker. Incidentally, I think either of these boys could be top contenders in either "AAA" or "AA"--a far cry from some years at heavyweight in "A."

The Louisville Regional will be a strictly two-man affair. Loushin and McGovern should dominate the proceeding with nobody even close. Look for McGovern to grab a low place or if the pairings are bad make it to the finals at Columbus.

Happ stands alone in the Washington Regional. The battle for the second qualifying spot should be between state alternate Bryant and Phelps. I think Bryant should get the nod here. Happ will pin either of them.

At Defiance the heavyweight situation is reasonably weak. Steele won the Findlay Classic and should repeat in this competition. Last year he had to face one huge heavyweight after another. This year he won't have that problem. Lora and Tabler (Blufton) are all the opponents I've been able to find so far, but I'd guess there are better boys waiting to challenge him.

The Bellevue Regional should feature some solid competition. Bloomfield state qualifier Damschroeder, the precocious Baker, and Moon all are reasonably close in ability. None of them will place at Columbus, but they match up well in this regional. Steele has beaten several of them, but the rest of the best heavyweights in the Northwest are here. I've gone with Baker and Damschroeder. Next year, Baker could really start to develop and might, along with McGovern, dominate that classification.

TEAMS

1. Richmond Hts. -- A team that will have to start paying attention to the threat posed by a burgeoning Ledgement squad. However, they still have a defending state champ, and two runner-ups for openers along with a classy freshman with a familiar name. All four have been favored at their respective weight classes. The real key, though, will be the performance of the second-line stars-- particularly Pawlowski, who is at a weak class, and MacLellan, who has often been unpredictable. If Kelly is healthy and Adkins mentally prepared, it'll be yet another team title for coach Mike Papouras.
2. Ledgement -- Two defending state champions and two placewinners form the nucleus of this team. While I see McKeon and the brilliant Holy repeating, there may be trouble for Cardaman and Dingers. Both are in difficult weight classes and Cardaman, in particular, may not make it through the regional. There are some key back-up people, though. Foremost among this group are McGovern, Grogan, and Palinskas since good performances by them would add immeasurably to the team possibilities. This team has a reasonable shot at upsetting Richmond Hts., but everything would have to go just right.

3. Bishop Ready -- Another powerhouse squad whose dreams came true when the regional concept went through. Now two will qualify from their area and that should help immensely. Weiner, DiSabato, Twiss, and Happ are their stars but each has a problem. Weiner is untested, DiSabato is having trouble living up to his surprising freshman year, Twiss has a tough weight class, and Happ has been hurt. The second wave of Marczika, Sarver, Lombardi and Schell can also help at the state level. Schell might really be a crucial element for this team.
4. Edgerton -- This fine team just keeps producing outstanding wrestlers. Thiel, state runner-up Herman, Whitman, and Kitchen are excellent at the low weights while Fitzcharles and Leppelmeier could both be finalists at the upper weights. Little Rowe and Knapp could also help if they can qualify.
5. Licking Hts. -- Their star Haywood should win at 105# and Fenton and Gischler should place. Of course, the latter two are both stuck in difficult weight classes. They need help from the likes of Flutey and Andy. Not much real chance of doing better than 5th, but the two teams below them could push them out of the top five.
6. McComb -- Another team that has been moving up the past several years. Rader is looking so good that you've got to figure him to win the state title--and whoever wins that weight class would probably be voted outstanding wrestler if there were such an award. Lora and McCullough should also place, but the real key is the next group of competitors. If Fasig or Montgomery can score at the state level they'll vault into the top five. Other possibilities might be Kreinbrink, Womack or the other Lora, but that doesn't seem very likely.
7. Grandview -- A team new to most fans and one I may be over-rating. Still Bonaventura, Morley, and Buscemi look like state performers. The single most crucial element will be if Bonaventura can break that log-jam at 119# in their regional and qualify for Columbus. Rotunda, Phelps, and the little Bonaventura could help.
8. Attica Seneca East -- A team with outstanding depth, but no real stars. Still they have nine solid wrestlers, and at the Bellevue Regional that should get them at least 3 or 4 qualifying places. Their top people are Roth, Siesel, Stacklin, and Bloomfield, but several of this group are at difficult regional weights. However, Stallings, Leddick, and Gurney could also play a part in Columbus.
9. Cardinal -- They have two potential state runners-up plus three or four question marks. Neikirk and Loza are solid, but Tatonetti, Peters and Lukas need to come through at the upper weights. A failure there would cost them yet another Top Ten appearance.
10. Fremont St. Joseph -- A surprise choice considering that this is clearly a rebuilding team for them. However, Hotz has come on "strong" while Ebling and Duty have shown remarkable progress. They'll need help from their one star, state qualifier Tom Weickert, if they are to make the Top Ten, and he has a difficult regional path.