

1988

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

FORECAST

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INTRODUCTION

The object of these annual reports encompasses two basic goals. First, is to acquaint everyone with the basic character of each weight class, and identify the participants who are likely to play a major role in its resolution. In addition, each district is examined as to whom its representatives might be. Second, is to stimulate interest in the whole state tournament process throughout Ohio. Naturally, accuracy is also of primary concern so care is taken to develop the most comprehensive list possible of outstanding wrestlers, though of necessity, the evaluation of their final place is, in part, subjective. This report was written during a seven day period in mid-January based on the information available at that time. It's kind of a snapshot in time with a picture that will surely change in many ways by tournament time. The new weight certification rules have made switching of weight classes much simpler so that I anticipate many changes from what is shown here. In fact, some of those moves may well be precipitated by information contained within this document.

This is probably one of the weaker recruiting years in Ohio as the great crop of seniors from last year has graduated. As always, there are some great 12th graders like the incomparable Holman, Pattie, Andrassy and DiSabato, but perhaps not so many as in most years. The real strength is with a crop of sensational juniors such as Fried, Buddie, Nelson and Cianciola and what appears to be a splendid sophomore group--many of whom are just becoming recognized now. I suspect that the next two years will be bountiful ones for recruiters.

One of the exciting prospects in 1988 is close team title competitions in all three weight classes. This will mark a resumption of such activity in "AAA" after a decade marked mostly by battles for the runner-up trophy. It is a whole added dimension in the large school classification and, hopefully, is not an isolated incident but begins a trend toward greater parity. Another heartening aspect of the sport is when a whole geographic area serves notice that they will provide stern competition for the rest of the state. In this particular case, the growth in wrestling participation and power is most evident in our Eastern District--particularly along the Ohio River. Several times in the past, this has been a hotbed of activity only to wane. Now outstanding individuals and schools have sprouted up all along the river from big schools like East Liverpool and Steubenville to small schools like state champion Cadiz and state runner-up Bridgeport. It is a real tribute to the administrators and coaches who have created this explosion of good wrestling.

I've often used these reports as a forum to discuss ways in which wrestling in Ohio could be improved--particularly in the context of the individual wrestler. This year there is only one really important issue that needs addressing, and that is, reevaluating the wrestle-back system used at the sectional, district and state level. The requirement of losing to a finalist before being allowed in the consolation rounds is archaic and unfair. It is unlikely that anyone in the state receives more tournament bracket sheets than I do. Yet during the past three years, I did not receive even one 16-team

tourney brackets that conducted consolation rounds in the same manner as at the sectional, district and state level. Instead, everyone has opted for, at the minimum, the much fairer procedure of permitting wrestlers into the consolations if the competitor defeating them makes the semi-finals. It adds only one round to the tournament, but pays off in fairer placements. The state tournament system has been developed as a way of recognizing the outstanding performance of individuals. A low cost/no cost alternative such as this that so dramatically increases the fairness of the tourney system ought to be adopted in record time--and yet it still isn't.

Two very positive steps have been taken in the past year and accolades should be given to all those who participated in these changes. First, is the restructuring of school classifications so that we have three equal divisions with identical formats at tournament time. It makes every school, now, a first class participant in the state championship process. Second, is the introduction of new weight classes, which I view as extremely positive. Granted, that is not a universally held view, but in my mind, it provides more opportunities for the average-size high school boy. Too often in the past, capable junior and senior wrestlers who had "paid their dues" were unable to compete while freshman saw immediate varsity action because they were small enough for the many low weight classes. This is better.

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

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AAA

The big news is that for the first time in the decade of the '80's, we face the prospect of a real battle for the team title in this classification. Not only that, at least four teams could win the title without in the least straining the laws of probability. This concept is so novel that many people appear confused and disoriented by its presence. Also of note is that the Northeast District which had twelve champions and seven runners-up last year does not appear to be quite so dominant this year. State titles should filter to several other areas of the state in 1988.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CASEY YACKIN (VALLEY FORGE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. K. Smith (North Olmsted) | 12. Branson (Glen Este) |
| 3. D. Smith (Akron Kenmore) | 13. Rocco (Lakewood) |
| 4. Monachino (Maple Hts.) | 14. Obreiter (Perrysburg) |
| 5. Define (Massillon Perry) | 15. Mihalic (St. Joseph) |
| 6. Williams (West Chester Lakota) | 16. Greenlee (Franklin Hts.) |
| 7. Marchette (North Canton) | 17. Rockey (Cincinnati LaSalle) |
| 8. Knaze (St. Edward) | 18. Darden (Sandusky) |
| 9. Duke (Midview) | 19. Dodson (Hilliard) |
| 10. Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) | 20. Miller (Oregon Clay) |
| 11. Stout (Upper Arlington) | 21. White (Xenia) |
| | 22. Harrison (Fairfield) |

It somehow seems unfair that one of the most difficult weight classes to forecast is the one you'll read first. It will be hotly contested and any number of participants could easily win. One important factor is that this weight class is geographically lopsided. Almost all of the best 103's come from the Northeast District meaning they'll emerge from either Mentor or Massillon. Those two tournaments will be cauldrons of activity at this weight with perhaps 12 out of the top 15 boys vying for but seven qualification berths. In terms of the eventual champion, I think that he will emerge from among the three seniors coming out of Mentor (Yackin, Smith and Monachino) or, perhaps, the flashy junior from Akron, Dontae Smith.

The three seniors should qualify out of Mentor since they'll be apart in the brackets (each from a different sectional). Each has his own individual strengths and weaknesses. State qualifier Yackin was at 105# last year and played varsity football at far more. Making the scratch weight each week will be draining. Yackin, while not an outstanding athlete, is strong and tenacious and tough to score on. He can win the close bout. Smith is exceptional on his feet and seems to have gotten out of the habit of trying to muscle everyone. He is probably the best all-around pure wrestler. But, in

the past, he has had trouble winning the big bout. Once behind, he seems to lose heart. Monachino, another state qualifier, beat Smith for that berth in a major upset--then lost to Emmerling by a single point in the quarter-finals. He has gotten better. This trio was all at Brecksville where Smith beat Monachino in a blazing overtime bout in the semis and then nipped Yackin by a point in the finals. I'm still picking Yackin although its fair to warn that the last time I was right at the introductory weight was in 1979.

There are four other exceptional 103's at the Mentor District. Knaze's only loss was a 2-pointer to Define while defeating, among others, Stout and Whitmer (6th last year). Duke has also beaten Stout and has not lost this year at 103#. Rocco, a transfer from St. Ed's, is also undefeated while Mihalic beat state "AA" runner-up Zamiska to win the Solon and has lost only to Define. They form a truly superior group vying at least theoretically, for but one spot. Richner (Riverside), champ and Outstanding Wrestler at Richmond Hts., and Freshwater (Mentor), 4th to the "three amigos" at Brecksville, are also solid.

A similar battle, though on a far smaller scale, will occur at Massillon. Dontae Smith wrestles a schedule that renders him virtually invisible during the year, but he is outstanding. By far the best athlete at this weight, he lost a tough 8-7 bout in the state quarter-finals and then was eliminated by the totally unfair consolation system. He certainly would have placed, otherwise. He can go with any of the top seniors from Mentor. Define won both the Tiffin and Perry tourneys and was runner-up at North Canton, while defeating three wrestlers in my top fifteen. Whitmer, 6th last year, has been gaining high places in tough tournaments, but has been upset several times to prevent victory. These would be the standard choices at this district were it not for the emergence of the freshman Marchette. Rather ordinary when at 112# he looks altogether different at 103#. He won the mammoth Medina which included a 11-2 triumph over Whitmer. He is the wild card in this district and what he will do here is unknown. However, he will not go peacefully for anyone. His big problem might be weight--he is a very large 103#. Yet another Smith (East Liverpool) is waiting in the wings here and hoping for some kind of miracle.

Williams, a state qualifier last year, is a narrow choice over a host of 103's in the Southwest. He has had a loss and tie, but seems to get stronger as the year progresses. He is the only non-northeasterner with a real chance for a place. Branson, Rocky and White are kind of typical choices for the other spots, but keep an eye on Harrison, a precocious freshman from Fairfield. Coach Ron Masanek always seems to develop great lightweight and this might be yet another one. Neidich (Cincinnati Elder) and Scherer (Fairborn Baker) are other possibilities.

The Northwest District is really weak. Obreiter seems to be about the best, but he couldn't even place at North Canton. Darden was 5th at Brecksville while Miller is still pretty much an unknown quantity. Other choices like Curry (Waite) will fare no better should they reach Columbus.

The Central District lacks muscle at this weight. However, Stout despite a number of losses is a seasoned veteran now, who may be able to take advantage of first round state jitters. He has the potential to upset at least part of that northeastern juggernaut. Greenlee and Dodson are my choices to battle for the second qualifying spot with Steele (Westerville North) and Clatterbuck (Northland) at their heels.

112

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARK EMMERLING (EAST LIVERPOOL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. J. Laflin (Fairfield) | 12. Bell (Dublin) |
| 3. Miller (New Philadelphia) | 13. Drake (Nordia) |
| 4. Castellana (St. Edward) | 14. Newsome (Toledo St. John) |
| 5. Manning (Willoughby South) | 15. Russo (Amherst) |
| 6. Canitano (Solon) | 16. Hill (Columbus Eastmoor) |
| 7. Amorose (Worthington) | 17. King (Euclid) |
| 8. Ramirez (Toledo Waite) | 18. Lahannas (Xenia Beavercreek) |
| 9. Lemle (West Chester Lakota) | 19. Roehlig (Massillon) |
| 10. Henessey (Cincinnati Elder) | 20. Baker (Grove City) |
| 11. St. John (St. Joseph) | 21. Bermudez (Lorain Southview) |
| | 22. Pitroff (West Carrollton) |

This is not a particularly strong weight class and there may be some movement of wrestlers from both the more difficult 119# and, perhaps, even 103# area to this classification--at least in some districts. Some of that has already occurred as state runner-up Jason Laflin and Chris Miller seem intent on competing here. In addition, it is a very difficult weight class to forecast because of the wide diversity of styles that we'll see in 1988.

My choice is the exceptionally tough competitor from East Liverpool, Mark Emmerling. His victory would end a "AAA" victory drought along the Ohio River that extends back to 1964 when John Scordas of Martin's Ferry took home the big school championship. Emmerling has competed at 98# the last two years finishing 6th and 3rd and missed going to the finals last year by a single point (9-8). Emmerling is a devastating pinner with a wide array of hooks and bars and phenomenal strength. His ability to score from the top sets him apart from the others at this weight class. On the other hand, he is not exceptional on his feet--although he shows improvement-- and that is, I'm sure, the one weakness the top competitors will attack.

Laflin, runner-up at 105# last year, is the wrestler most likely to test Emmerling's takedown skills at Columbus. Last year, he wrestled two great periods with Elsass in virtually an even bout, only to succumb to a third period blizzard of takedowns and back points 20-9. He was not impressive at North Canton finishing fourth, but he rolled through the St. X Tourney at 112#

with very little trouble. He and Emmerling have totally contrasting styles and the one who can set the tempo of their bout will surely win. Lemle seems to have passed state qualifiers Henessey and Lahannas in that district, but is no match for Laflin. Henessey always comes on strong at tourney time so his qualification seems reasonably safe. However, Pitroff, Fearn (Cincinnati LaSalle), and Tritsch (Fairborn Baker) lead a host of hopefuls after Lahannas' berth who has had a bit of a shaky season including an absence from the lineup.

Emmerling will be challenged by the exceptional Miller in his own district--that is if Miller decides to compete at this weight class. Kind of an unknown throughout much of the state, Miller is outstanding and will be a real factor at this weight class. One concern, though, is that last year the #1 seeded Miller failed to make weight at the Sectional. Roehlig would seem to be third best in this area although young McCollins (Massillon Perry) has shown flashes of brilliance.

Castellana and Canitano lead the Cleveland contingent which does not appear as strong as most years. However, if Manning shows up at this weight, it will certainly enhance the quality. Castellana, 5th last year, lost a hard fought battle to Emmerling in Columbus when he couldn't stay off his back in the 2nd period. He rebounded well in the third, but could not make up the difference. This year he has lost twice including an upset loss to Amorose (after beating him earlier). He has much the same style as Emmerling--not great on his feet and good on top--but does not do it quite as well. Canitano started out the season on fire winning the Outstanding Wrestler at Solon and has not looked quite that good since. His finals match at Medina versus Emmerling was instructive. Winning 2-0 in the 3rd period, Canitano in the down position could not stay off his back and was pinned. Finally, rumors abound that Manning may drop to this weight. If so, he would have to be in the top five and would be a major factor. On the other hand, such a weight loss could be draining. There is a quantum jump downward after this trio with Drake, Russo, King and Bermudez all as possibilities. Drake could be a crucial element in Nordonia's team aspirations and his qualification would be a major plus in the efforts. Russo can look so good sometimes, but this junior hasn't quite put it all together. If he does, watch out. However, the real "sleeper" is the freshman St. John who may well qualify above the more experienced wrestlers.

Amorose has wrestled a very competitive schedule and met many of the good 112's in the state. He should be battle hardened by tourney time and is capable of giving anyone in the top group a good match. State qualifier Bell hasn't been at 112# yet, but I have to believe that he'll move down shortly. He and teammate Boroff at 119# are a strong duo. Hill and Baker are also solid competitors and the Central District has at least four state caliber boys vying for only two spots. Even Callinan (Groveport) and Stevenson (Marion Harding) are tough.

The Toledo area is not as strong. However, Ramirez can be very good. He had two chances to place last year, but then lost them both; the last mystifyingly so. When on his game he could well be a high place winner. This is his last opportunity so it will be interesting to see how he matches up.

State qualifier Newsome has had trouble bridging the gap between wrestling at 98# and competing at 112#. He should qualify again, if only because everybody else has been having even less success. Other possibilities include Davenport (Perrysburg), Duncan (Findlay), and Beemer (Wapakoneta).

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SHJAMIL PATTIE (ELYRIA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Biehl (Uniontown Lake) | 11. Fridley (Cincinnati Sycamore) |
| 3. Lally (Solon) | 12. Long (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 4. Pergram (Middletown) | 13. Palermo (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 5. Kovacs (Strongsville) | 14. Ortman (Reynoldsburg) |
| 6. Manning (Willoughby South) | 15. Curry (West Chester Lakota) |
| 7. Boroff (Dublin) | 16. Murray (Fairfield) |
| 8. Campbell (Westerville North) | 17. Karrenbauer (Massillon) |
| 9. Evans (Princeton) | 18. Leonti (St. Edward) |
| 10. Bukowski (Toledo Whitmer) | 19. Kane (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| | 20. Gribben (Gahanna Lincoln) |

This is one of the strongest and deepest weights in "AAA" competition this year. With the possible exception of 152#, it may well be the strongest weight class in the entire process regardless of competition. There are, at this point in time, ten returning state qualifiers and a whole host of new faces who have shown outstanding ability. Every district with exception of Massillon is loaded at this weight and the Cincinnati/Dayton area has nearly ten athletes with State credentials.

Despite this, Shjamil Pattie will be the top-heavy favorite when tourney action begins in late February. He may well be (except for Holman) the most talented senior in the state and has, in my opinion, almost unlimited potential. Lightning quick and with exceptional strength, his three battles with Allan Fried were classics of a kind. He defeated Fried at the regional and then lost an epic overtime bout in the State finals that will be long remembered. It was a bout where he outscored Fried, but where a certain lack of aggressiveness cost him stalling points that thrust the bout into overtime. This year he looks to be more of an initiator of action rather than the classic counter-wrestler he was last year. He reminds me a lot of Andy Daniels (the NCAA champ out of Akron Buchtel and Ohio University) except that he is a year or two ahead of Andy at this stage.

The Mentor District will provide a stern test for Pattie. Three returning state qualifiers will be primed for a big upset and each has had an outstanding season himself. Manning beat Pergram at State last year and wrestles a solid style that's difficult to score on. Lally is a never give up wrestler who won the North Canton and Solon tournaments and finished a strong 3rd at the very tough Medina. He is very strong in the late going. Kovacs

wrestles a schedule that has prevented him from meeting a lot of the truly tough competitors. However, he pinned defending "A" champ, Neikirk, in the first minute to win the Kenston and he is very physical and strong. All of these four could place at Columbus. At the district level, the pairings should be good because they all exit from different sectionals. Should everything go according to script, they would all be semi-finalists at Mentor.

While this quartet is solid, they are not upset-proof. Leonti, Birds (Stow), and Costanzo (Mentor) are all strong second-echelon performers with thoughts of an upset. Leonti might have the best chance since he emerges from the same sectional as Pattie so that he will be away from him at Districts. He was impressive at North Canton losing only to Lally in overtime and beating state runner-up Laflin for 3rd.

Biehl is about all there is at Massillon. That is unless Chris Miller moves back from 112# to 119# because of problems with weight. Only a junior, Biehl has split two bouts with Lally and wrestled extremely well in every bout. His strength is consistency, and with the right state pairing, he would face Pattie in the finals. After him the rest of the district is weak. I've listed Karrenbauer, but that's only a wild guess. Fiore (Warren Howland) and Perrin (Wadsworth) are other thoughts, but there are real opportunities here. Incidentally should Miller go at this weight, he would be in my top five overall.

The Toledo District is solid but their two qualifiers may not have the firepower to place. Bukowski wrestles a lot of close-to-the-vest low scoring bouts and that style will not work against the Cleveland entrants. However, he has done very well with it all year. Long is my second qualifying choice and he has shown rapid improvement during the year. I expect him to peak at tourney time. Kane and Cervetto (Toledo Waite) have outside possibilities.

The Columbus trio of Boroff, Campbell and Ortman is a strong group from the central part of the state. Campbell, a two-time qualifier two years ago, has just returned to the line-up and won the West Jefferson in impressive fashion. Campbell has twice fallen just one bout short of state placement. Boroff won the Brunswick in the Cleveland area, but did not face any of the top-guns from that area. As good as this trio is they will have trouble placing at the States because of the high quality at this weight. Two other possibilities are Gribben and Wilson (Westerville South).

It will be a real donnybrook in the Southwest. It will be a battle between four state qualifiers (Pergram, Palermo, Murray and Evans) and a bevy of newcomers (led by Fridley, Curry, Bolton, and Doll). The competition will be brutal and I expect that some of these boys to opt for the easier 112# class.

My favorite is three-time state qualifier Scott Pergram who has lost in the first round every year. He is due for some state victories and has the strength and skill to do so. He is, however, hampered by a weak schedule. Evans, Palermo and Murray were also first round losers last year in Columbus, but they will have to work hard just to get there. Murray, a legitimate 112#,

has had to move up when Laflin moved down, but his real quickness may help negate the size disadvantage somewhat. Fridley is a real threat to these state qualifiers defeating Evans en route to the Outstanding Wrestler Award at the Holiday Tourney. Always a slow starter he had come on strong recently. Still that may have been a hot weekend rather than a projectable trend. Curry, one of the bellwethers of the fine Lakota team, beat Murray in the St. X final and is primed for a state berth as well. Other possibilities are Doll (Dayton Wayne), Bolton (Tecumseh) and Perino (Cincinnati St. X), but they may well get lost in the crush at this weight.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAUL HAMM (SOLO)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Hunter (Lima Sr.) | 12. Borrer (Holland Springfield) |
| 3. Grant (Westerville North) | 13. Jahn (Grove City) |
| 4. Cassoni (West Carrollton) | 14. Johnson (Dayton Wayne) |
| 5. Atienza (Maple Hts.) | 15. Spangler (Sidney) |
| 6. Andrassy (Nardonia) | 16. Voinivich (Lake Catholic) |
| 7. Miller (Xenia) | 17. Esterle (Barberton) |
| 8. Battaglia/Millson (St. Edward) | 18. Denslow (Ashland) |
| 9. Kopp (Lorain Southview) | 19. Powell (Princeton) |
| 10. E. Laflin (Fairfield) | 20. Roshon (Pickerington) |
| 11. Marconi (Alliance) | 21. Cyrus (Fairborn Baker) |

This is the kind of weight class that forecasters hate to analyze. There is no dominant figure at 125# and, in fact, there are as many as eight wrestlers with a reasonable chance to win it all. In addition, few of the top contenders have wrestled one another and there is a whole spectrum of styles represented by the top group. The variance in style also means that pairings will be very influential in determining the results.

My choice is state runner-up Paul Hamm who wrestled brilliantly at tourney time last year and has pretty much picked up that trend this year. However, there are two principal reservations with Hamm. One is his "floppy" style which is susceptible to the big move and the big upset. Atienza beat him in the sectional final last year with three near falls in the third period. The other is the fact that he has wrestled at 125# only once this season, and suffered his only loss then. He'll need to stabilize his weight for the three grueling weeks of tournaments. Still, he is an amazing wrestler who can find all kinds of ways to win. His victory over Matt Helm, 3rd in Michigan last year, was Hamm at his creative best.

State qualifiers Andrassy and Atienza look, on paper, to be Hamm's toughest competitors, but I'm not so sure that will be the way it works out. Battaglia is so sharp on his feet that he may give everyone fits. His problem may be getting out on Hamm and Atienza and the big throw from Andrassy. St.

Ed's has qualified a wrestler at this weight every year since 1977 so Battaglia certainly has tradition on his side. Kopp, another former state qualifier, can never be taken for granted, but he has trouble with Hamm/Atienza type wrestler. This quintet will battle for the four qualifying spots with Voinivich and Meecha (Elyria) certain to make a play for at least one of them.

It would only be right if Hamm and Hunter met in the state finals. Last year, their semi-final match was aborted when Hunter and his coach became confused as to the scheduling and missed their starting time. Hunter, clearly crushed by the forfeit, then fell to 6th place. This year he dominates the western portion of the state and, in fact, beat his nearest rival there, Borror 18-6. Hampered by a relatively weak schedule and lack of talent in the room he has done a solid job of improving. Besides Borror, possible qualifiers are Denslow, Johnson (Tiffin Columbian), and Gerken (Toledo Central Catholic).

Grant dominates the central part of the state in much the same manner as Hunter controls the west. His only loss was a 1-0 defeat by "AA" pick Jeff Letzner in the North Canton final on a controversial stalling call. Short, but very powerful, he may have trouble with leg wrestlers like Hamm and Atienza. Behind him, way behind him, are Jahn and Roshon who are only marginal chances for the last two qualifying spots. Dritz (Upper Arlington) would be a strong choice to beat out one of those two.

The Southwest District is again loaded at this weight. Right now the mammoth Cassoni is the dominant figure with victories over Miller and Laflin. He has made enormous improvement since his 13-9 record last year. State qualifiers Miller and Laflin have to be careful about repeat trips to Columbus. They both have been beaten several times, and will be threatened by Johnson, Spangler and Powell. Powell, in particular, may be better than I have rated him. Even behind this group are a whole raft of other solid performers, which should lead to exciting district competition. The real question though, will be whether the four qualifiers will be able to place at Columbus when faced with the strong competition from around the state.

One district that won't have that problem is Massillon. Again, the field here will be very weak with virtually no chance of any of its qualifiers placing. I've listed Marconi and Esterle as the top two, but this is purely speculation. People like Gray (Kent Roosevelt) and Walker (Warren Howland) are possibilities, but it's likely to be a trio of unknowns that journey to St. John's Arena.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ALAN FRIED (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 2. | Gillmor (Nordonia) | 12. | Miller (Kent Roosevelt) |
| 3. | Petche (St. Joseph) | 13. | Marsico (Cuyahoga Falls) |
| 4. | Brandt (Westerville South) | 14. | Nadeau (Massillon Jackson) |
| 5. | Salemme (Cincinnati St. X) | 15. | Kullman (Massillon Perry) |
| 6. | Richner (Painesville Riverside) | 16. | Ohrlich (Westerville North) |
| 7. | Mattingly (Uniontown Lake) | 17. | Seesholtz (Hilliard) |
| 8. | Berdysz (Mentor) | 18. | Herman (Trotwood Madison) |
| 9. | Clasen (Perrysburg) | 19. | Taylor (Xenia) |
| 10. | Rodriguez (Lorain Southview) | 20. | Gray (Cincinnati Princeton) |
| 11. | Marinis/Ramirez (Fremont Ross) | 21. | Lambert (Pickerington) |

Alan Fried is the single most dominant and charismatic wrestler in Ohio today. The junior from St. Ed's is already a two-time national USWF champion and a state champion and has only two high school losses in two years. But it's how he wins that captures the attention of everyone as he combines power, speed and balance into a package that is today unbeatable. He has been at 135# where he has crushed every opponent (including state champ Adam DiSabato), but will move to 130# as his weight drifts downward (he could easily make 125# or even 119#). There is almost no chance that Fried will lose a six minute match this year, but his physical style that creates some of his most brilliant moves also carries with it the only real possibility of defeat. That would be the result of an injury to an opponent where a referee (as they sometimes inexplicably do) would rule that Fried's move created the danger and thus disqualify him. He'll have to be aware of such a possibility.

I've listed Gillmor and Petche at both this weight and 135# even though I believe they'll move to 135# when Fried's intent becomes clear. Other weight switches may also occur although there is some advantage to being at a weight class such as this because Fried will scare off most of the tough competition.

At Mentor the competition will be fierce for the spots behind Fried especially if Gillmor and Petche are at this weight. Gillmor, a junior, was 3rd at 119# and has a brilliant future, but has wrestled far better at 135#. Petche, but a sophomore, was a tower of strength last year and gave Fried a real battle at the OCC. They are both placewinning material.

Should they not appear, there is still plenty of depth at this weight at Mentor. Rodriguez was 6th last year, a remarkable feat considering his takedown skills. He has not been particularly sharp this year and may be ripe for an upset. Berdysz lost a regional struggle in overtime to Rodriguez last year, but the junior from Mentor looked very sharp at North Canton until Fried

dismantled him on a technical fall. His only other loss was to Richner who was a regional qualifier as a freshman, but has never reached the State. Another possibility is Marsico who will be a long-shot at Mentor, but who would fare better almost anywhere else. Kumbhall (Brunswick) is yet another possibility.

Brandt, Ohrlich, and Seesholtz seem to be seem to be the power in the Central District with all of them having plenty of experience. Brandt was a state qualifier, but was pinned in the first round by Gillmor. Ohrlich failed to place at North Canton, but won the West Jefferson in impressive fashion. Seesholtz was 2nd at the Dayton Holiday Tourney, but may be the weak link here. Lambert and Dritz (Upper Arlington), if at this weight, could be heard from in terms of state qualification.

The picture is clouded at the Toledo District. Marinis has been at 135#, but may go at 130#. If so the excellent Ramirez would probably drop to 125# where he would be a factor challenging Hunter and Borrer. In either case, the Fremont Ross representative and state qualifier Clasen would be the favorites to qualify at this district. Marinis, twice a state qualifier, was curiously passive at Medina, but is probably a state qualifier here at 130# or at 135#. Delrue (Toledo Rogers) and Cervetto (Toledo Waite) are other possibilities here while the sophomore Andy (Ashland) is probably a year away.

The Massillon contingent will be something of a mystery at Columbus, since they won't have a lot of experience outside their own area. Still they should be a dangerous group because several of them are outstanding athletes. Mattingly whipped Clasen at North Canton before Hamm destroyed him in the final. He is not a physical wrestler, but given an early lead can be very tough. Miller, just down from 135#, tied Gillmor at 13-13, but has had some erratic moments in his career. At the top of his game, he is formidable. Both Nadeau and Kullman could upset Miller. Kullman won the Tiffin Tourney, but was only 6th at Hudson. Yarian (Green) and Pomeroy (East Liverpool) are two additional threats at this district, but will go in as underdogs. If Miller is "on" and Mattingly stays healthy, this group could have several low places at Columbus.

The Southwest Regional is led by the rapidly improving Salemmme who has won two major tournaments this year. He will not challenge Fried, but could do well with virtually anyone else in this field. The quality drops off after him with Herman, Taylor and Gray several giant steps behind. It is likely that several of these latter three will be hard-pressed to qualify with perhaps Smith (Fairborn Baker) or Deardorff (Amelia) putting on a challenge.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOSH ROBBINS (CINCINNATI ST. XAVIER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Pinckney (Marion Franklin) | 11. Orolin (Akron North) |
| 3. Daher (Mayfield) | 12. Walendzak (Oregon Clay) |
| 4. Gillmor (Nardonia) | 13. Miller (Tecumseh) |
| 5. Lemon (Massillon Perry) | 14. Easton (Toledo Start) |
| 6. Petche (St. Joseph) | 15. Simpson (Xenia) |
| 7. Olah (Warren Howland) | 16. Bletz (Hilliard) |
| 8. Widenhouse (Fairborn Baker) | 17. Bucher (Toledo Rogers) |
| 9. McKinney (Worthington) | 18. Hagar (East Liverpool) |
| 10. Hackett (St. Edward) | 19. Hollis (Kettering Fairmont) |
| | 20. Hayden (Kent Rossevelt) |

This is my upset special. There are a lot of reasons not to pick Robbins including his sophomore status, his failure to make the state tourney last year, and the city of Cincinnati schools' record of not having a "AAA" champ since 1976. However, there are equally powerful reasons for choosing Robbins not the least of which is his undeniable talent and dedication for the sport. At this point, this is not the strongest weight class and Robbins has the ability to win the close matches that will inevitably occur here. Even so there are formidable obstacles to his victory including the powerful Pinckney, the canny Daher and the ever-dangerous Gillmor.

Robbins towers over the Southwest District field. Last year he lost a criteria decision in the quarter-finals there, but he should be comfortably ahead in most of his bouts this year. A possible exception is Widenhouse who he beat by only two points in the St. X. final. Miller, Simpson and Hollis should be the top contenders for the final two spots and I favor the first two of the aforementioned.

There are a lot of good reasons to choose Pinckney to capture the state title here. He is exceptionally strong and experienced, and scores points in huge bunches. In fact, in the first draft of this report, he was my choice, and he may make me wish that I didn't rewrite. McKinney has low-place potential and his big win at the Gorman may boost his confidence. Bletz and Tzagournis (Upper Arlington) look like the two best bets for the last spot.

The Mentor District will send a powerful quartet to Columbus. Daher lost a nailbiter to Skelton in last year's regional and when Skelton lost in the semis the archaic consolation rules prevented a second chance. Skelton then won the state crown the next weekend. This year Daher has decisively beaten Gillmor twice, but unaccountedly, has had some mis-steps against lesser opponents. Gillmor, 3rd at 119# last year, will, I believe, decide that 135# is really the better weight class for him. Clearly it gives him a solid shot

at a state title, something that is not true at 130#. A devilish pinner with that chin pull-steppover, Gillmor can score from virtually any position. He could catch Robbins early and put him away before the bout really begins. I suspect that Petcher, too, will opt for this weight class again because his goal even as a sophomore is a state title. In fact, there are a lot of parallels between Robbins and him. Both had great freshman seasons, but missed state qualification, and both have unbelievable futures at their respective schools. Finally, Hackett will move up to 135# as well, and should be the fourth Mentor qualifier. He will be more comfortable at the higher weight. Unfortunately there is a strong chance of an unbalanced draw at Mentor with three of these four being placed in the some half bracket. Should that be so, someone far less deserving will gain that fourth spot since there appears to be a quantum jump in ability between these four and other possible contenders. At the top of that second echelon might be Stojetz (Lake Catholic), Lofton (Maple Hts.) and Lawlor (Willoughby South).

Lemon heads a strong Massillon contingent which should also include state qualifier Olah and the underrated Orolin. This is Lemon's fourth varsity year and he is due for some big wins while Olah won the Mentor Regional last year on some gutsy wrestling. Orolin, injured most of last season is my third choice here. Hayden and Hagar (East Liverpool) are back-up possibilities.

The two Toledo qualifiers will be long-shots to place at Columbus. I've listed Easton, Bucher, and Walendzak as top contenders, but the contest there is really wide open. Gerken (Toledo Central Catholic) and Beach (Lima Shawnee) should be in the hunt and it would not be surprising if an unlisted wrestler qualified. At the state meet this group will be physically overpowered by many of the other participants.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE SMITH (XENIA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Martinez (Uniontown Lake) | 11. Shepard (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 3. Barto (Solon) | 12. Getz (Stow) |
| 4. Sweeney (Toledo Macomber) | 13. Lewis (Glen Oak) |
| 5. Elbin (St. Edward) | 14. Shepard (Nordonia) |
| 6. Schwartz (Worthington) | 15. Wimsatt (Fairborn Baker) |
| 7. Cayse (Ashland) | 16. Schlosser (Galloway Westland) |
| 8. Cunningham (East Liverpool) | 17. Besase (Toledo Start) |
| 9. Voth (St. Ignatius) | 18. Gwinner (West Chester Lakota) |
| 10. Troup (Pickerington) | 19. Taylor (Toledo Rogers) |
| | 20. Fletcher (Austintown Fitch) |

In my mind this weight class is dominated by a quartet of outstanding athletes from four different districts. Each one has an impressive set of credentials and there are good reasons why each could win it all. I believe

that the quality drops off rapidly beyond this foursome and it is unlikely that any of them will lose it to anyone but somebody else in their group. If you had to characterize each in a phrase Sweeney is the best athlete, Martinez the most consistent, Barto the most tenacious, and Smith the best all-around wrestler.

Looked at in that manner (which is strictly a matter of opinion) the choice of Smith is inevitable. Already a two-time state qualifier he totally dominates the southwestern area with nobody even able to go six minutes with him. In part, that's a problem, since Smith does not get battle hardened in the same way as a Martinez or a Barto. Nonetheless, this boy is a joy to watch and if he remains confident he should win it all. Coincidentally, his two previous state appearances have been identical. A first round victory, a second round loss to the eventual state runner-up and then another consolation loss. That pattern will be broken this time. It is unlikely that any of the other qualifiers from his district will place--or even, perhaps, win more than isolated bouts. Pushing the trio of Shepard, Wimsatt and the suddenly hot Gwinner, are Keller (Dayton Wayne) and Rice (Cincinnati Moeller).

Martinez certainly has reasons to believe that he can defeat Smith. After all, he has wrestled a much more challenging schedule unscathed, and defeated a dispirited Smith 5-2 in consolation action last year. That led to a third place state finish in his sophomore year and a hint of possible greatness to come. Martinez has squeaked by Barto twice and does it with great mat presence and a minimum of mistakes. Cunningham is a solid second choice at Massillon, but the third spot is wide open. I've listed Lewis and Fletcher, but any of a half dozen boys could take it. Dugan (Jackson) and Melin (Geneva) are two such possibilities.

Barto is one of those wrestlers who just always seems active and never gives up. He will not have the glossy record of some of the others losing twice to Martinez and once to "AA" pick Gegan who he later tied. Yet, I've been very impressed by this state qualifier who seemingly never tires. He exits the most difficult district and may be a little more nicked and bruised than the others. Elbin has moved, almost unknown, through a strong schedule losing only to Barto. Very tough on top this junior has an opportunity for a low place. Will the real Bob Voth please stand up? Is it the state qualifier as a sophomore who cruised through the Brunswick Tourney or is it the oft-injured, easily upset senior who failed to place at Solon. Nobody will know until tourney time, but when right he can be very good--and could aid St. Ignatius' team chances immeasurably. Shepard, too, is an important cog at Nordonia whose unexpected qualification would certainly enhance their team chances. Getz, Senquiz (Lorain Southview) and the unsung Albert (Brunswick) are other possibilities. Getz, in particular, missed state qualification by a single point at Massillon last year, but must now move to the far tougher Mentor District.

Sweeney was a regional champ and state qualifier last year and should better that in 1988. Cayse, Besase and Taylor are clearly steps below him and only one of this trio can qualify. Several other competitors are virtually on a par with this latter trio so that the competition will be close, if not in the long run, terribly meaningful in terms of state places.

The Columbus District is not blessed with one of the four standouts and, in fact, does not appear strong. Schwartz appears best even after some unhappy moments at the Gorman--where his key match with Cayse ended in tournament disqualification. He was solid at North Canton finishing second at 145#. Troup, just down from 145#, won the Licking Hts. Tourney and is a narrow favorite for the second berth. Schlosser will test either of these two while Flanagan (Gahanna Lincoln) cannot be far behind either.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE ANDRASSY (NORDONIA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Wilson (Stow) | 12. Parker (Mentor) |
| 3. K. Miller (New Carlisle Tecumseh) | 13. Machovina (North Olmsted) |
| 4. Corso (Sandusky) | 14. Hagan (Marlington) |
| 5. Caruso (Westerville South) | 15. Martin (Toledo Rogers) |
| 6. Stanton (West Chester Lakota) | 16. Wright (St. Edward) |
| 7. Bullock (Massillon Perry) | 17. Hanneman (Dublin) |
| 8. Jollay (Dayton Wayne) | 18. Seeger (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 9. Williams (East Liverpool) | 19. Farkas (Austintown Fitch) |
| 10. Pearson (Ashland) | 20. Cardaman (Maple Hts.) |
| 11. Margioras (Xenia) | 21. Haeefele (Worthington) |

This group listed above is probably not the cast characters--at least not entirely--that you'll meet in March. The 152# weight class is just so loaded that a lot of wrestlers will decide (and wisely so) that they can do better elsewhere. This excess bounty will be delivered to both the 145# and 160# weight classes. In fact, some is already here in the persons of Stanton and Wilson. However, it probably isn't going to make too much difference in the final analysis because Andrassy should successfully defend his title.

Andrassy has been sensational all year winning everything in sight--and most impressively. A state runner-up as a sophomore, he brooked little opposition in winning the 138# title last year. His only two losses in three tough years of campaigning were to Guy Palker (in the state finals as a sophomore and in a dual as a junior). This boy is one of the finest senior wrestlers in Ohio.

Andrassy does not have to look far to see his nearest competition--Wilson is virtually right next door. Wilson hasn't been at 145# yet, but I'm convinced that he'll end up here. A solid competitor, he upset Joe Collins at the States and then lost by a single point to Schetter (7-6). He eventually finished sixth, but he wrestled courageously. This year at Brunswick, Marty Collins pinned him early at 152# for his only loss. Parker, often out of the lineup, won the North Canton and will do well if healthy. Machovina and Wright head a slightly suspect group below this trio with at least another

half dozen possibilities. Included in this group are the promising sophomore and Medina runner-up, Genovese (Solon) and the talented, but sometimes erratic Cardaman. Watch for Cardaman. He is a pinner who can put together the big upset.

Miller was very impressive at the States pinning Caruso and losing an interesting bout to the freshman sensation Splete. It's difficult to gauge improvement given the limited information one gleans from New Carlisle, but this boy seems to have real talent. Stanton, a successful campaigner at 152# all year, will do much better here, and I may even be underrating him. His only losses have been to Collins and Holman. There is good depth here with Jollay, Margioras and Seeger all with state-type credentials. Burns (Fairfield), Hicks (Xenia Beavercreek) and Strochinsky (Cincinnati Oakhills) would qualify out of Columbus, but the odds are long here.

Corso, who always seems like an exceedingly rugged and physical wrestler, has been at 152# most of the year except at Brecksville. There he swept to finals before meeting Andrassy who pinned him just as he had done in the state meet last year. Along with Pearson, this duo should capture the two Northwestern places. Martin and Gerken (Toledo Central Catholic) have the best shots of upsetting them.

Caruso seems like the only competitor of real quality at this weight in Columbus. A state qualifier last year, he should dominate in this area. I've listed Hanneman and Haefele behind him, but there are a whole raft of people right behind them. Haefele has lost to some very suspect people and I wouldn't be surprised if state qualifier Newcomb moved down and traded weights with him. Hanneman was only one win and two points away from a state berth last year, but has not yet demonstrated that form this year.

Bullock has won the Tiffin and finished third at North Canton. He could well capture a low place, but it may not be easy. Williams also has placement chances, but basically, this is not an overpowering district. A real surprise might be Hagan who has wrestled a schedule that doesn't really tell you how good he might be.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE COLLINS (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Taylor (Lorain Southview) | 11. Simon (Brush) |
| 3. Schetter (Dayton Wayne) | 12. Coleman (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 4. Splete (St. Joseph) | 13. Ramirez (Fremont Ross) |
| 5. Bundy (Findlay) | 14. Lamano (Westerville South) |
| 6. Luebke (Clayton Northmont) | 15. Niffenegger (Cincinnati Oakhills) |
| 7. Randleman (Sandusky) | 16. Dennis (Alliance) |
| 8. Newcomb (Worthington) | 17. Huber (Xenia Beavercreek) |
| 9. Gilmore (Toledo Rogers) | 18. Eckels (Reynoldsburg) |
| 10. Drago (St. Edward) | 19. Tenaglia (North Canton) |
| | 20. Etter (Uniontown Lake) |

Wow! Even with quality wrestlers like Wilson, Stanton, Sweeney, Kasler and Banc apparently leaving this weight, it is still one of the more powerful classes in "AAA" in the past several years. Four truly superior wrestlers lead this group, but there are at least another half dozen solid wrestlers who would easily place most years. Let's introduce the principals.

First is defending state champion Robert Taylor who cruised to the 145# title never winning by less than four points. This year he is totally undefeated including victories over the West Virginia state champ and our 160# pick Marty Collins. Taylor is solid, patient and extremely strong. A "thrower" in his early years, he has adopted a more conservative style still studded with, though, occasional flashes of the old brilliance.

Joe Collins was brilliant last season until a draining illness caused a third place regional finish and contributed to a first round state loss. Still he thumped Taylor twice last year including a 10-2 rout in the consolation finals at Mentor (Taylor's last high school loss). He has missed most of this season with a knee injury and was defeated 5-0 by Schetter at the St. X.

Splete is a prodigy. Last year as a freshman he finished third at 138# in "AAA"--an unheard of feat in Ohio (the last to do so well at a middle weight was Mike DeAnna). A marvelous athlete he, too, missed some early season action because of the football play-offs. His schedule, to date, has been weak so its difficult to gauge his progress this year, but, clearly, he will be a handful for anyone.

Schetter lost 11-6 to Taylor in the state finals last year and then had an outstanding summer defeating a whole host of big names. This year he has had no close bouts including his aforementioned win over Collins. He would be a heavy favorite any other year.

I've selected Collins on the assumption that his knee will be 100% by tourney time. He has shown the ability to beat Taylor and I believe he'll be too strong physically for Splete. At the state the draw could be unbalanced. The Mentor winner (Collins?) should be away from both Splete and Taylor and the odds suggest that Schetter would be on the other side of the bracket, too. That would give Collins an enormous advantage and the best shot at the title. Whoever wins it, it will be high school wrestling at its best.

That trio of Splete, Taylor and Collins has given others a reason to search for more congenial weight classes, and Sweeney, Kasler, Banc and apparently Wilson have opted for other opportunities. Should Wilson appear, he would be the fourth qualifier and the draw should be perfect because this quartet represents four different sectionals. Otherwise look for Drago, Simon and Coleman to battle for the fourth spot with the draw of crucial importance.

You must be bracketed away from two of the three headliners to have a chance. Simon won the Richmond Hts., Coleman the Brecksville and Drago the Ready Invitation so each has good credentials. Woods (Solon) just one bout from States has also just rejoined his team and will be a real factor in this second echelon contest. This district will be a real donnybrook.

Schetter should dominate in the Southwest with former state qualifier Luebke a strong runner-up. After that the quality recedes rapidly now that Stanton has gone to 145#. Look for some unknown names to pepper the list of state qualifiers here.

The Northwest District is terribly crowded. I like Bundy and Gilmore who are just a smidgen away from real success--but not at this weight in 1988. Bundy lost to Schetter at Tiffin by only five in a 11-6 battle. State qualifier Randleman had a shaky Brecksville Tourney and may decide that 160# is a more forgiving class. Ramirez is also solid, but if Randleman is here too, he'll face stiff competition for a state berth. Williams (Mansfield) and Donaldson (Wapakoneta) are good, but, unfortunately, this year they are over matched.

Newcomb fooled me last year by finishing a solid fourth at Columbus, and, I guess, I'm going to give him the opportunity to do the same thing this year. The Outstanding Wrestler at the Gorman he may not be able to go with the real good guys. Two losses to Sweeney may have colored my thinking here, but I still think he's a long-shot for a place. Lamano and Eckels were regional performers last year who'll battle for the second spot. Price (Westerville North) is another possibility.

The Massillon District is very weak. If the trio that qualifies wins two bouts in total at Columbus, I will be amazed. Dennis was runner-up at Solon and Medina, but did not see much competition at either location. Only a junior, he doesn't match up with the powers at this weight. Those below him have even less hope.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARTY COLLINS (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. T. Doss (Gahanna Lincoln) | 12. Miller (Kent Roosevelt) |
| 3. Chamberlain (New Philadelphia) | 13. Zachary (Cincinnati Princeton) |
| 4. Ramey (Springfield South) | 14. Jollay (Dayton Wayne) |
| 5. Ankrom (East Liverpool) | 15. Heid (North Canton) |
| 6. Righi (Worthington) | 16. Giaspell (Logan) |
| 7. Sweeney (St. Edward) | 17. Montgomery (Piqua) |
| 8. Randleman (Sandusky) | 18. Rivera (Clay) |
| 9. Banc (Lake Catholic) | 19. T. R. Doss (Fairborn Baker) |
| 10. Fuller (Troy) | 20. Nowak (Toledo St. John) |
| 11. Denzer (Brush) | 21. Mihacevich (Brunswick) |
| | 22. Brown (Xenia) |

State runner-up Marty Collins should breeze through this weight class and if brother Joe wins at 152# they'll be the first twins to win "AAA" state titles since the Sadowsky twins in 1963. Nobody has come close to Collins at this weight class and his only loss was when he cut to 152# for the Brunswick. Last year he lost to State champ Landolfo four times--the last a narrow 5-3 decision in the state finals. Unless there is some drastic weight shifting the battle here will be for second place.

A pair of 152#ers look to be the next best to Collins at the Mentor District. It's always difficult to tell how a wrestler will do at a higher weight, but in this case you've got to go with quality. Sweeney has won the North Canton and Ready while Banc was impressive at the Kenston. He would probably rank 5th or 6th if he goes back to 152#. If the weight proves to be too much there is a boatload of contenders below them. I've listed Denzer and Mihacevich, but I've also been impressed with Kasler (North Olmsted), another 152# move up, Douglas (Mentor) and Moody (Elyria). Timmons (Cleveland Hts.), a move-in, always seems on the verge of a big win, but so far hasn't been able to come through.

Doss was fifth last year, beating Gibbs for that spot, but he's not going to be ready for Collins. Righi is also excellent and the North Canton and Gorman champ should be the second Central District qualifier. Glaspell an excellent southeastern wrestler, would seem to be left out.

Chamberlain and Ankrom are a formidable one-two punch out of Massillon. Ankrom qualified as a sophomore at 167# and got G. T. Taylor and Akers in his two bouts. He was outscored 36-4 but will surely get an easier draw this time. Chamberlain has never quite done all that one expects based on his record. A senior this year, he has this one last chance to show what he can do. A relatively weak schedule hurts him. Miller and Heid will battle for that third qualifying spot and both are solid journeyman wrestlers. Either one can win at the state level.

The Southwestern District has a lot of depth, but the quality is generally suspect. State qualifier Ramey is a shaky possibility for a state place, but Springfield South does not wrestle an awesome schedule. I've listed six other possibilities scattered throughout the ranking and any of them could do well enough to qualify. In addition, King (West Chester Lakota) and Laughlin (Cincinnati Northwest) are possibilities. It would be interesting if somehow Tracy Doss were to meet T. R. Doss--hopefully not on our telecast.

The Northwest District is weak. I've listed Randleman at this weight, too, because I suspect this state qualifier will opt to go in this direction after some introspective thought. After that it is very weak. Nowak and Rivera are names that came to mind while Eichenlaub (Holland Springfield) and Wiley (Perrysburg) are possibilities. This latter boy was fifth at North Canton.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE BUDDIE (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Gibbs (North Canton) | 11. Evans (Marion Harding) |
| 3. DeIRosa (Nordonia) | 12. Lowery (New Philadelphia) |
| 4. Patterson (Westerville North) | 13. Everett (Toledo St. John) |
| 5. Talley (Clayton Northmont) | 14. Reid (Alliance) |
| 6. Ferguson (West Chester Lakota) | 15. Queen (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 7. Coe (Cloverleaf) | 16. Gyorfi (Lorain Southview) |
| 8. Cullum (Holland Springfield) | 17. Spinning (Massillon Jackson) |
| 9. Klusman (Cincinnati Elder) | 18. Jenkins (Sidney) |
| 10. Paglio (Lake Catholic) | 19. Walter (Upper Arlington) |
| | 20. Gottschalk (Kettering Fairmont) |

This is a reasonably strong, well-balanced weight class with contenders from all portions of the state. Still, last year's third place winner, Mike Buddie should prevail in what now appears to be a closer than anticipated competition. That's because Buddie is struggling (if that word can truly be used in this context) to wrestle up to the potential that we all envisioned as early as his freshman year. He was upset by Gibbs at the St. X Tourney and has survived some closer that expected battles--most notably with Peet at Brunswick. This has occurred primarily because, for the first time, he must work at making weight and because his competition is "sky high" at the opportunity of wrestling him. Buddie almost seemed to reach beyond his skills and into his potential for his epic battles with state champion Genovese at the sectional and district (they split). He needs that kind of challenge to do the same this year--and, maybe, Gibbs will become that. If so, look for Buddie (like Holman last year) to start cashing in on that state championship potential.

Incidentally, if both Collins twins and Buddie were all to win, it would give St. Ignatius three consecutive champions. The last time that has been done in "AAA" by a school other than St. Edwards was way back in 1969 when Hicks, Milkovich and Calendar all won. They almost had four as Brooks lost a high scoring battle in his final.

At Mentor, Buddie will face the stiff challenge of DeIRosa--third at 167# last year and amazingly strong. He gave Buddie a strong match the first week of the season at Solon. After that there is a quantum drop off in quality. Paglio and Gyorfi are rated in the top twenty, but in both cases that is based more on potential than accomplishment. Other possibilities are Nasser (Strongsville) and McMahan (Solon).

Gibbs has so far had a storybook season capped by his upset of Buddie. He has won the Medina, North Canton and St. X Tourney (all very strong) and captured the Outstanding Wrestler Award in the latter two. Only two of his 15

victories have gone six minutes and all this from a wrestler who last year was most erratic. Still he finished sixth at 155# and he has one of the best coaches in the state. The Massillon District is very strong at this weight with at least four other bona fide state calibre wrestler fighting for the other two spots. I've gone with Coe and Lowery, but Reid and Spinning are just about as good. Reid down 11-3 to Gibbs hit him with about as pretty a lateral drop as you'd care to see and almost stole the match with it. Coe won the Richmond Hts. Tourney and has been on the fringe of real success. He should find it this year. Lowery wrestles a relatively weak schedule, but has the talent to overcome it. Besides he has Chamberlain in the room to work out with. Spinning won the Hudson and had to default in the Wadsworth final and has shown good improvement this year. It should be exceptional competition at this district.

In Columbus, Patterson, Queen and Evans seem to stand well above the rest of the competition. Patterson in particular, looked good at North Canton until Gibbs caught him, and he pinned in 31 seconds in the West Jefferson final. He missed state qualification by one point last year. Evans won the Marion Harding Tourney, but was upset at the Gorman final. That won't happen often. Queen is also strong, but could be challenged by Hicks (Lancaster). One unknown is Walter (Upper Arlington) who wrestled some big matches last year and was a regional qualifier at 175#. Injuries have prevented from making any kind of assessment of his improvement this year.

Three state qualifiers head the Southwest District but none of them can realistically hope for more than a low place. Again, Talley and Ferguson have wrestled well so far while Klusman was just returned from inactivity. There are a lot of potential upset makers below this trio with Jenkins and Gottschalk being ranked. Lee (Cincinnati Taft) and Tornberg (Centerville) are two other possibilities, but three or four other nearly equivalent wrestlers are also present at this weight.

The Toledo District probably has the least overall talent but Cullum and Everett are both solid and could score at the state level. Other possibilities are Bucher (Toledo St. Francis), Chaney (Sandusky) and Rush (Ashland).

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: REX HOLMAN (UPPER ARLINGTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Gregory (Stow) | 11. Howitz (Westerville North) |
| 3. LeForce (Franklin) | 12. Hernandez (Milford) |
| 4. Curiale (Lakewood) | 13. Hollifield (Nordonia) |
| 5. Lewis (Toledo Libbey) | 14. Emery (Toledo DeVilbiss) |
| 6. House (Toledo Rogers) | 15. Smith (Cincinnati St. X) |
| 7. Dye (Massillon Jackson) | 16. Fenton (Cincinnati Oakhills) |
| 8. Beekley (Toledo Bowsher) | 17. Cuckler (Barberton) |
| 9. Johnson (St. Edward) | 18. Reinbolt (Walsh) |
| 10. Hilgefort (Sidney) | 19. Fodor (Medina) |
| | 20. Clouser (Geneva) |

I've had six consecutive champs at this weight class and never have I felt more confident about extending that streak to seven. As I said last year, Rex Holman will be remembered as the outstanding big man produced by Ohio during the decade of the 1980's, and his second Ohio State title will never be in doubt this year. Holman is surely one of the two or three best senior 189's in the country and will probably represent the USA team in matches against Pennsylvania and Oklahoma. Nobody, in what is a relatively weak field, will come within ten points of Holman, and the real struggle at this weight will be for the second through sixth places.

Two state qualifiers, Gregory and Curiale, head the field at Mentor, and surprisingly, both are still only juniors. Gregory may be a shade better this year, but Curiale appears to have more long-term potential. He needs to get stronger, and there is no question that that will simply be a function of maturation. Incidentally, Holman has pinned them both. After these two, the Mentor field is wide open. North Canton champ Johnson was impressive there but has absorbed several fearful drubbings since then. Hollifield won the Brecksville title and was third at Solon to a pair of "AA" wrestlers. He represents a real opportunity for Nordonia to gain another point maker in the team race. Reinbolt looked solid at the Medina and he could be a factor here, as well. Long shot possibilities are Catalano (Solon), Single (Lake Catholic) and the erratic Klimkowski (Maple Hts.)

LeForce should dominate the Southwest and place well at Columbus. A state qualifier in 1987 he looked sharp at the West Jefferson in mid-January--his first appearance of the year. A solid step (or maybe two) behind him are a large group of journeymen performers who will not threaten any of the top performers. Hilgefort, Hernandez, Smith and Fenton seem to be the best of this lot, but McAdams (Xenia) and Masden (Fairborn Baker) are two other possibilities while Groh (Cincinnati Elder) and the sophomore Elam (West Chester Lakota) could play a role in this district's outcome. Pairings will be crucial in determining state qualification, but only LeForce will survive the first round at Columbus.

The strongest district is the one at Toledo and, unfortunately, only two will qualify from there. Lewis is a potential finalist, but has not wrestled in several weeks and may not compete. If he does, he will be a handful for everyone but Holman. House finished third at Medina and captured the Rogers and Springfield titles. Last year he missed state qualification by a single point. Beekley did make it to Columbus last year, but would be the odd man out if Lewis does participate. Even beyond this trio, Emery, the Stritch champ, Gibson (Lima Shawnee) and Simon (Holland Springfield) have possibilities. Emery, especially, could probably qualify out of any other district.

Holman dominates a very weak Central District. Howitz looked very good at the North Canton until injured, and thus he remains a question mark. Other possibilities include Burge (Grove City) and Petrocelli (Worthington). A long-shot might be Murphy (Independence), but this group is very weak.

Even weaker might be whatever trio emerges from the Massillon District. I've rated Dye in the top ten, but that may be only optimistic. After that it will be wide-open with people like Cuckler, Foder and Clouser looking for state opportunities that would exist for them at no other district.

It seems very likely that, perhaps, one or two of the good 171's may move up to fill this void or that several unknown will emerge to grasp state qualification. Two other possibilities might be Huff (New Philadelphia) and Straley (Uniontown Lake).

HVY

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICH FRIMEL (NORTH OLMSTED)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Burwell (Massillon Perry) | 11. Ginn (Franklin Hts.) |
| 3. Conner (Toledo Rogers) | 12. Chenevey (Massillon Jackson) |
| 4. Edwards (Alliance) | 13. Mullin (Cleveland St. Joseph) |
| 5. Lahr (Pickerington) | 14. Hearn (West Carrollton) |
| 6. Delsanter (Euclid) | 15. Sperling (Clayton Northmont) |
| 7. Paglieri (Dublin) | 16. Schilling (Massillon) |
| 8. Kowalski (Toledo Cent. Catholic) | 17. Oakes (West Chester Lakota) |
| 9. Houston (Trotwood Madison) | 18. Murphy (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 10. Bobish (Maple Hts.) | 19. Budd (Toledo Whitmer) |
| | 20. Atkins (Fairborn Baker) |

Last year the famous Brakeman Jinx at this weight class was laid to rest, at least temporarily, by Paul Long's victory in the state finals. Admittedly, it took an unlikely set of events for this to occur--including one major upset --but Long was magnificent never winning any bout by less than nine points. That was my first success since 1980 and I left St. John's confident that I could extend this "streak" to two consecutive years simply by choosing Rich Frimel in 1988. After all, he had defeated Long convincingly (8-0) in the regional finals, and only a dubious game plan in the semi-finals (resulting in the aforementioned upset) had prevented him from meeting Long again in the state finals. He was clearly the class of what would be returning.

Well, the awful reality today is that Frimel is no longer a sure choice and, in fact, is only a narrow favorite at this weight. Last year's trim 220 pounder with speed and quickness has so far been replaced by a 240# wrestler who looks slow and somewhat out-of-shape. An all-state football player, he may also be distracted by choosing between proffered college scholarships. Nonetheless, he is still an amazing talent who should dominate the relatively weak Mentor District, and capture the state crown that many felt was within his grasp last year. He needs to dedicate himself to that quest because an approach that relies totally on his inherent talent is likely to fail.

My other three choices to qualify out of Mentor are state qualifier Bobish, the enigmatic Delsanter and the somewhat unknown Mullin. I believe that Delsanter has the best chance for a low place, but it won't be easy. He never made it out of his admittedly difficult sectional last year, but handily defeated state qualifier Bobish in their dual. Bobish is big and strong but, so far, has shown little improvement over last year. Mullin is a real long-shot, but he does not face strong competition for that fourth qualifying spot. Clearly, except for Frimel, this is a down year in the Cleveland area with regard to heavyweights.

The totally opposite picture emerges in the Massillon District. Burwell is a real bulldog who, if he can shake off a series of nagging injuries, can compete with anyone. Winner of both the North Canton and Tiffin titles, he missed a state appearance by two points last year. He will not beat himself--a major plus at this weight--and his aggressive style should help him with the referees in the many close bouts symptomatic of this weight class. The mammoth Edwards will also be a major factor this year. At 275# he is tough to do much to and he knows enough wrestling to hit the big move. He upset Frimel the first week of the season and he has the potential to do so again. He may also be prone to the big upset--something that victimized him last year. Chenevey and Schilling are also both excellent, but the three qualifying spots will eliminate one of them. Both have been finalists in every tourney they have wrestled this year. Frantz (New Philadelphia) is another contender with good skills but dubious qualification hopes.

The 5'7" (my estimate, not his) 230# Conner has had some excellent wins this year. He has already defeated the defending state heavyweight champ from Michigan and Edwards en route to winning the Medina Tourney and beat "AA" state runner-up Pullins at the Rogers Invitational. His biggest advantage is that it is difficult to do anything to him. He has such a low center of gravity and such quick feet that everyone has trouble scoring on him. On the other hand, he does not initiate much aggressive action either so he is involved in a lot of low scoring bouts. The big negative there is that refereeing and breaks become terribly significant in such situations. A state qualifier as a sophomore, he lost just such a match last year at the regional and missed out on a return visit. The 270# all-state football player, Kowalski, is getting better. He should be the other qualifier out of Toledo and he could score at the state level. Budd and Ujuagi have had successes this year but they are long-shots to make Columbus this year. Transferring to the Cincinnati/Dayton area might be their best chance.

The trio of Lahr, Ginn and state qualifier Paglieri are a formidable group in the central region of the state. I rated both Lahr and Ginn ahead of Paglieri last year, but, of course, it was Paglieri who made it to Columbus. I still like Lahr for some kind of place, but all three of these boys should challenge the people rated above them. They are all experienced and have had substantial success this year. Behind them Hopkins (Marion Harding) and Richardson (Worthington) await some glimmer of an opportunity. They are likely to be disappointed.

The southwestern portion of the state is very weak at this weight. I've listed six possibilities for the four qualifying spots, but really its just guesswork. All four of last year's state qualifiers graduated and between them they won only two bouts at Columbus. The qualifiers this year may not even do that well. I've listed the Dayton Holiday Tourney winner Houston highest, but he will be challenged by the rapidly improving Hearn and Sperling in his own area along with Murphy and Oakes from the Cincinnati area. Regional qualifiers Atkins and Anaya (Troy) could also play a role here as well as Merk (Cincinnati Oakhills). It should be wide-open and fun, but basically this group will be bracket fillers in Columbus.

TEAMS

One of the aids I've used to rank teams is a formula, derived about ten years ago, based on my individual picks. Utilizing it this year shows four teams within a couple of points of one another, well within the margin of error. Since the device is quite accurate (after all, it's correctly picked the "AAA" team champ for nearly a decade), one must conclude that at last we'll have a real team championship battle in 1988.

1. St. Edward -- You have to go with the champs when it's real close. One big reason is that they have a lot of opportunities to score--the problem is making sure some of those pay off. Fried is a certain champ and the bonus points he'll provide may well make the difference. Castellana must do well and, perhaps, even improve on last year's 5th place finish. After that, they have lots of hopes and hopefuls. Best chances are probably Elbin, Sweeney, Battaglia and Hackett while Knaze, who could score heavily at State, probably won't get through that murderous district. If Willoughby South's Manning goes to 112#, it opens a spot for Leonti, but puts Castellana at greater risk. They are the only team with the potential to create a runaway if everything goes right. Get them this year since they only graduate name two important seniors on the squad.
2. Nordonia -- It's always a plus to be returning the most state points and four state place winners. Joe Andrassy is solid at 145# while DelRosa is rock steady at 171#. The problem is to select the absolute best weight for Gillmor, and keep Jim Andrassy from getting psyched out at Mentor. If Drake, Shepard, or Hollifield can qualify, St. Ed's will have to start a new string. However, if Manning is at 112#, it would virtually doom Drake's chances. Remember the last team to win in "AAA" since the St. Ed's reign began was Nordonia.

3. St. Ignatius -- Three state champions score 75 to 80 points and that might be enough to rake the team title. I think Marty Collins and Buddie are solid choices (though Gibbs might disagree), but Joe Collins must master the insanely difficult 152# class. In my mind, the key to that is winning the district. There is no back-up help except for state qualifier Voth, but who knows what to expect there.
4. Solon -- The quartet of Canitano, Lally, Hamm and Barto could conceivably all be state champs, but more likely they all will place. It's difficult to discern where points could come from unless Genovese or McMahan get incredibly hot. Actually Woods is their next best, but he's at 152#.
5. Uniontown Lake -- A nice team that emerges from one of the easier districts. Martinez and Biehl should score heavily and if Whitmer can get to Columbus, he would score, too. Key figures are Mattingly, Straley and Etter who must contribute in a positive way.
6. North Olmsted -- The two bookends Smith and Frimel figure to score heavily and that will provide a solid foundation of around 40 points. Then it's up to people like the Machovinas and Kasler to chip in what they can.
7. Massillon Perry -- This is a team that is liable to surprise a lot of people in Columbus. Burwell should be a finalist and Define, Lemon and Bullock are all "flat-out" good. If a Kullman or a McCollins can upset a few people, this team might have aspirations all the way up to #5.
8. Worthington -- Newcomb, Righi and Amorose are the heart of this squad, but it has a lot of other possibilities. I especially like McKinney, but Schwartz or Haeefele could help, too.
9. West Chester Lakota -- The best dual team in the Southwest, but a little suspect in terms of a State tourney. State qualifiers Williams and Ferguson lead the way and Stanton should be able to score heavily at 145#. That leaves Lemle, Curry, Gwinner and Oakes as other possibilities. They'll need to be at peak form to do much more than this.
10. East Liverpool -- Emerling not only should get championship points, but his style will pick up some pin points as well. Cunningham and Ankrom both should qualify out that easier district and, perhaps, they'll get help from others in that solid lineup.
11. Xenia -- Steve Smith is the main cog, but there are so many other chances. State place winner Miller must come through again and two or three of the others must qualify and score.
12. Toledo Rogers -- The two big men, House and Connor, should do very well and both could well place. Gilmore is at the rugged 152# class, but it's emptying out fast and middleweights like Martin or Taylor could really help.

AA

Many people find this to be the most exciting classification and it's easy to see why. It has great individuals, state-wide competition and close team races. Expect more of the same this year as the restructuring shuffled teams in and out of this division, but, fortunately, left the excitement there.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MACO GONZALEZ (FOSTORIA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Clark (Lebanon) | 11. McCrone (Holy Name) |
| 3. Zamiska (Twinsburg) | 12. Smith (Lexington) |
| 4. Wegener (Swanton) | 13. Corder (Eaton) |
| 5. Hill (Medina Highland) | 14. Brown (Washington CH) |
| 6. Abbott (St. Paris Graham) | 15. Tecco (Buckeye) |
| 7. White (Shelby) | 16. Sprague (Carrollton) |
| 8. Hall (Tipp City) | 17. Jasper (London) |
| 9. Carcelli (Benedictine) | 18. Valentine (Wilmington) |
| 10. Hockenberry (N. Concord J. Glenn) | 19. Mead (Watkins Memorial) |
| | 20. Hall (Vincent Warren) |

This appears to be a weight class that has three strong districts (Northeast, Northwest and Southwest) and two others (Central and East/Southeast) that are questionable at best. Thus those that draw boys from these weaker districts in the early rounds will certainly have something of an advantage.

My choice at this weight is the excellent Maco Gonzalez who finished third last year behind Zapadka and Zamiska. He split two bouts with Zapadka and lost to Zamiska in the quarter-finals by a single point. This year he is stronger and more confident, and should overcome some difficult competition. Some of that will be coming in his own district where the very excellent Wegener should garner a medium to high place. Both he and Gonzalez will be pressed hard by Smith and White who were "AAA" regional qualifiers a year ago. White missed state qualification by but two points. Both Smith and Jones (Willard) finished ahead of White at the Gorman, but it won't happen again. At any rate, there are five excellent candidates for but two spots here. Gonzalez should make it handily, but White will give Wegener a stern test. The rest will wish that they lived in Columbus or Steubenville.

State runner-up Zamiska is still a strong threat here. I suspect that he is having great difficulty making the weight (unlike his father who was not greatly inconvenienced making 103#), and that has affected his concentration. He is still most formidable at the "AA" level. Hill won the North Canton, but then looked not like himself at Medina. He should place and with the right

draw, perhaps even be a finalist. After that the last three state berths are open for grabs. Carcelli, McCrone and Tecco have all shown good potential but none of the trio is a sure thing when it comes to qualification. Bowers (Rocky River) Sisson (Akron Lake) and particularly, Jazwa (Olmsted Falls) are all Southwestern Conference wrestlers who have upset potential.

Clark may be the best 103# wrestler in the southwestern part of the state regardless of school size. I look for him to be a finalist and possibly the champion. He wrestles a far more difficult schedule than Gonzalez. Abbott is a very big 103#er and did very well at Medina. I wonder if the low weight will give him a problem at year's end. State qualifier Hall also returns and he may be better than I rated him. Still only a sophomore, his only loss was to "AAA" Define. Both Corder and Valentine could qualify in most areas, but they're "on the bubble" here. If they can get to Columbus, they can score there.

The Eastern District does not look strong, but there are some new faces that are hard to evaluate. Hockenberry, a regional qualifier last year, is back and has had good success. Brown at last look was 14-0, but has not wrestled terribly strong competition. Sprague has not had total success, but he wrestles a much strong schedule than the first two boys. He was a "AAA" regional qualifier last year. Another possibility is Hall. (Vincent Warren) who lost to Brown, but has beaten most of the others in his area. Patterson (Cambridge) is a long shot.

The Central District is totally without hope. Unless I'm totally missing someone it seems almost impossible to find a state caliber 103# here. I've listed Jasper and Mead, but that is pure guesswork. Juniper (Whitehall) and Davis (Hamilton Twp.) are other thoughts, but certainly not answers. Help.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SHAWN NELSON (NORTH ROYALTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. McCumber (Rossford) | 13. Miller (Defiance) |
| 3. Robertson (WarrensVille Hts.) | 14. Creemens (London) |
| 4. Boulton (Lebanon) | 15. Ricker (Dover) |
| 5. Eberhardt (Cincinnati Purcell) | 16. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 6. Grumbling (Highland) | 17. Johnson (Lewistown Indian Lakes) |
| 7. Randall (St. Paris Graham) | 18. Riglo (Olmsted Falls) |
| 8. Metzger (Swanton) | 19. Jones (South Point) |
| 9. Futo (Twinsberg) | 20. Acklin (Columbus DeSales) |
| 10. Fondale (New Lexington) | 21. Green (Carlisle) |
| 11. Tolliver (Circleville) | 22. Coates (West Geauga) |
| 12. Slates (Canal Fulton Northwest) | 24. Peters (Watkins Memorial) |

This is a weight class that has almost everything--great individual stars, a large number of returning state qualifiers, and great depth in every

district--everything but suspense. That because, despite a tremendous array of talent, Shawn Nelson is just too good. Last year he was the "AAA" state champ at 98# winning in the finals 18-5. It would be the same today if he were wrestling "AAA." This junior from North Royalton is right now pretty much unbeatable. Currently there are 15 returning state qualifiers returning to this weight class--seven alone in the Northeast District. What is likely to happen is that some of them will be beginning to search out a more hospitable weight class. Do not be surprised to find at least three or four of the boys (or, maybe, more) listed above move to 119#.

Nelson dominates a Northeastern District that returns seven state qualifier plus some excellent new blood for only five state berths. Robertson, 4th in "AAA" last year, gave Nelson his closest battle in the semis losing 11-4. He returns with hopes of moving higher. State qualifier Grumbling looked excellent at North Canton wrestling 112#. In the finals against Castellana, he wrestled two great periods, but then got turned and pinned in the 3rd period. At 119# at Medina he didn't look like the same wrestler and failed to place. Still, he may go back to 119# anyway because of the logjam here. State qualifier Futo upset Marinelli at Columbus before bowing out. He is excellent in down-tempo, close bouts. Slates placed at 98# last year--coming from nowhere--but has been injured all season. I'm guessing he'll return here if he is able to come back at all. Bailey was 5th last year, but he is now in some danger of failing to qualify. He has not had a sparkling year and the competition will clearly be fierce. State qualifier Riglo faces the same set of circumstances. In addition, Coates and Troyer (Streetsboro) are looking for a low district place, too. It should be a real donnybrook here.

I was tremendously impressed with McCumber, and he, certainly, has the tools to be a finalist. Still but a sophomore, he wrestles with style and elan of a much older boy. Metzger and Miller should battle for the second and last qualifying spot, although there are others with chances, too. Metzger seems due to qualify after his disappointment of last year. Leonard (Fostoria) and Thompson (Elida) are also good, with the latter wrestler winning a bout in the "AAA" region last year.

Boulton is another one of Lebanon's stars and they have a very strong team. A "AAA" state qualifier last season, he beat everyone in his region except "AAA" state runner-up Laflin. He is a potential finalist. State qualifier Eberhardt and Randall are also excellent and could capture low places. Randall is a tough, feisty wrestler who'll cause all but the best some real problems. The fourth spot should be a dogfight. State qualifier Johnson and Green are both good but bad pairings could ruin their hopes. Hitchcock (Eaton) has the ability to slip into a qualifying berth as does Thompson (Greenhills). If Cash (Little Miami) is at this weight, he could also play a role in resolving its final outcome.

The Eastern District returns three state qualifiers, but they are likely to be overwhelmed when they reach Columbus. Ricker and Fondale have had another good year and will be favorites for two of the three spots. The other state qualifier, Jones, has apparently been stuck in something of a vacuum (as has the entire team) when the wrestling program at South Point had a coaching

change. Now things appear to be straightened out, but how far back this has put Jones is unclear. Taylor is 15-0-1 at Miami Trace including a draw with "AAA" state qualifier Lahannas. Francis (Bellaire) is another good candidate should Jones falter.

In the Central District I see Tolliver having moved ahead of state qualifier Creemens with both having the best shots at qualification. On the other hand, I'm not quite sure what to think about Acklin. He had a sensational West Jefferson Tourney beating Randall by a point in the finals. Other than that he has been quite ordinary. Obviously, he has upset potential. Peters is another one you may see at 119#, but if here, he will also be a strong threat.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LUKE SHOCKLEE (AKRON ST. VINCENT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Marinelli (Columbus DeSales) | 12. Najem (Canfield) |
| 3. Nero (Chanel) | 13. Schleich (Dayton Chaminade) |
| 4. Kassinos (Wilmington) | 14. McGarvey (Dayton Carroll) |
| 5. Ehlinger (Defiance) | 15. Rodrigues (Revere) |
| 6. McGhee (Steubenville) | 16. Clarke (Maumee) |
| 7. Hinkle (Highland Morrow) | 17. McCoy (Vincent Warren) |
| 8. Sheldon (Willard) | 18. Powers (London) |
| 9. Woods (Triway) | 19. Connelly (Rocky River) |
| 10. Parker (Clermont NE) | 20. Sexton (Shelby) |
| 11. Yinger (Nelsonville York) | 21. Kemp (Buckeye) |

This would appear to be strictly a two-man contest between Shocklee and Marinelli with state runner-up Nero not able to reach the finals again. Actually by the time you read this you'll probably have a better idea than I do since these two should meet in the OCC. However, if you think I'm going to pick against the winner of the Brakeman-Massa Award for the Outstanding Wrestler at Medina, you better think again. Shocklee was sensational in triumphing at the toughest weight class there, and was most deserving of the award. Last year, he was 3rd in the state losing only to Cianciola. Ironically he, not Nero, would have been the runner-up had Shocklee in his regional final with the Chanel boy not gotten pinned late in the third period when ahead by ten points.

The Northeastern District is toughest top to bottom. Besides Shocklee, there is the aforementioned Nero who has had some problems at 119#. Two major reasons are that he doesn't have the enormous size advantage he enjoyed at 105#, and everyone is sky high to wrestle a state runner-up. He came on strong at the end of last year, and I expect him to do so again. Woods is an outstanding sophomore who starts a run of four very good Triway wrestlers. State qualifier Najem also got off to a slow start and will have to pick up

the tempo to qualify again. Rodriques was 2nd at Brunswick and could be the fifth qualifier here. On the other hand, Connelly, Kemp, Wrobel (Benedictine), Deck (Holy Name) and Ralls (Olmsted Falls) all are capable, too. Again, it looks like Shocklee and Nero to control this district.

Marinelli is a quantum jump ahead of everyone else in the Central District and the major obstacle in Shocklee's championship path. State qualifier Hinkle should nail down the second spot with Powers or Itnyre (Marysville) as possibilities. Still, it looks like Marinelli and Hinkle once again.

The quality of the Southwestern contingent at this weight still remains an unknown at this time. Kassinos should be very good while Parker, Schleich and McGarvey seem to have solid credentials. They certainly seem capable of scoring at the state level with Kassinos having placement potential. However, none have previous state experience. Other thoughts here are Shannon (Milton Union) and Perkins (Kenton Ridge).

Once he moved down to 119#, Ehlinger has wrestled very well. Now that Defiance is back in "AA" competition some of their better wrestlers should do well. Ehlinger may be a prime example of this possibility. Sheldon has won two major tourneys this year and could supplant Ehlinger as top rated here. Both Clarke and Sexton should do well although I'm unsure as to Clarke's status. He may go 112#. If so, that would surely mean teammate Smith (now rated at 125#) would drop and he would undoubtedly be ranked first in this area.

The Eastern District features state qualifier McGhee who I may be ranking too high. He was only 4th at Richmond Hts. losing twice to Jones (Warrens ville Hts.) who does not appear to figure in the Northeast District. Still he has done well in his own area. Yinger, a terror in the southeastern part of the state, was 36-1 last season but that one-point defeat in the regionals marked his exit for the season. He should qualify this year. McCoy has done equally well in his area and is 24-0 at this point (they wrestle several very large dual meet tourneys). I'm somewhat at a loss to identify back-ups should this trio falter. Maybe, Garverick (Warsaw River View) or Baker (Martins Ferry) would be possible candidates.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF LETZNER (MEDINA HIGHLAND)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Priebe (Holy Name) | 11. Teasdale (Bellaire) |
| 3. Smith (Maumee) | 12. MacVeigh (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 4. Rogers (Columbus DeSales) | 13. Mengerink (Upper Sandusky) |
| 5. Livengood (Bryan) | 14. Steer (Watkins Memorial) |
| 6. Eves (Chanel) | 15. Nixon (Akron Hoban) |
| 7. Gottes (Tipp City) | 16. Scott (Steubenville) |
| 8. Kennedy (Olmsted Falls) | 17. Mills (Hamilton Ross) |
| 9. Raney (Camden Preble Shawnee) | 18. George (Fairfield Union) |
| 10. Bartlett (Cambridge) | 19. Thomas (Washington CH) |
| | 20. Yarnall (Louisville) |

Letzner is one of those who wins and wins and nobody really seems to notice. He should dominate this weight and yet when it's over nobody will quite be aware of how it happened. He's not flashy like a Fried or a Cianciola. He just grinds out one victory after another until the season is over. Last year he was 27-2 losing only to four-time champ Burnett in the state finals and Fried at North Canton. This year I don't expect him to lose at all.

Much of his toughest competition will come from his own district. Priebe with a great cradle and four years of experience beat "AAA" state runner-up Hamm decisively and his only loss was the result of a default. He could give Letzner some problems. Eves in his first varsity year was 3rd at both Solon (losing to Hamm) and Medina (losing to Letzner) and won at Richmond Hts. What a remarkable start and I expect it to continue through tourney time with a chance for state placement. State qualifiers Kennedy and Nixon are logical choices for the last two spots, but logic is not always the order of the day at the Northeast District. I've listed Yarnall as a possible intruder, but I also like Griggs (Beaver Local), Withrow (Triway), and Klanduch (Streetsboro). The lads with the hot hand will get those last two spots.

Smith has long been a top notcher in the Toledo area and this year that should pay off in a state place. He may drop to 119# but that does not appear to enhance placement probabilities. State qualifier Livengood is up 20 pounds, but still as successful. Mengerink missed Columbus by one point last year and must beat Livengood to make it this year. He'll go in as the underdog, but only a slight one. Walborn (Swanton) and Weilbacher (St. Mary Memorial) look not to have enough firepower.

Rogers is a fooler. He does look or wrestle like a top echelon competitor, but he surely is. A state qualifier at 112# last year, he seems much better this season. Steer and George are the chief threats for the second spot, but they'll have difficulty winning at the State level.

The Southwest District has four solid competitors any of whom, with the absolutely right draw, could place. Ranev got that pairing last year and grabbed a 6th. This despite the fact that Gottes crushed him 10-0 for 3rd in his regional. Actually with the consolations set up as they are you really are better off as the last qualifier because you will meet a champ from somewhere else who can "carry" you. MacVeigh and Mills look to be the best bets for the last two spots, but Mills may have a tenuous grip on this last berth.

The Eastern District is hard to figure. Bartlett defeated Teasdale and remains undefeated going into the OVAC. Teasdale, twice a state qualifier, could do anything. Last year he was brilliant at the OVAC winning it all, and then slowly dropping off from that peak. He may go 130#, too. State qualifier Scott was not impressive at Richmond Hts., but has a reputation and experience in his own area. State qualifier Thomas is a possibility as is Gentile (Vincent Warren) with whom he drew. A very close contest for those three spots, but having few state implications that is unless Teasdale gets torrid.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE BIBLE (BELLEFONTAINE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Steele (Milton Union) | 11. Hanchin (Sandusky Perkins) |
| 3. Tullos (Fairview Park) | 12. Keith (Byesville Meadowbrook) |
| 4. McAtee (Big Walnut) | 13. Dotson (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 5. Lewis (Louisville) | 14. Gray (Wilmingon) |
| 6. Wazgar (Medina Highland) | 15. Cleckner (Tipp City) |
| 7. Brandon (St. Clairsville) | 16. Hunt (Brecksville) |
| 8. Kline (Triway) | 17. Takach (Steubenville) |
| 9. Anderson (Swanton) | 18. Hobbs (Galion) |
| 10. Sasso (Chanel) | 19. Davis (Circleville) |
| | 20. Cain (Valley View) |

This is a weight class that somehow still seems unformed and incomplete in my mind. I haven't been able to "get my arms around it" and really figure out what will happen. It does appear that the best two wrestlers are both from the Southwest District. It would be, I believe, a first if both finalists came from that district. Most of the other best wrestlers come from the Northeast so we may anticipate a number of struggles between participants from those two areas.

The battle should be between Steele (6th last year) and Bible and they could easily meet in the finals three weekends in a row. I favor Bible by the narrowest end in a 2-1 split. I look for Bible to win the third and last one. Both boys have previous state experience so their role as favorite should bother them little. Cleckner and Gray are two solid candidates for the last pair of spots with Cain a possible challenger. There is a large difference between Steele and Bible and everyone else here.

In the Northeast, the picture is one of confusion as the top wrestlers take turns beating one another. Tullos has been very sharp all year and has to be given a razor thin edge for the top spot. A St. Ed's transfer, he sat out most of last year with injuries. This year he has stayed healthy and wrestled exceedingly well winning three tournaments. Lewis and Wazgar both have burst on the wrestling scene after several years of basically undistinguished apprenticeship. The latter boy, in particular, looked sharp at Medina at 130# while losing only to "AAA" state runner-up Laflin at 119# in North Canton. State qualifier Sasso while only a junior has already had an interesting history. As a freshman he qualified for States at 98# losing narrowly in the first round. Last year he was dogged by injury early in the year, then could no longer make 98#, and finally couldn't beat Nero or DiDomenico at the next two weights. This year he is one of the shortest 130's around, but still an effective wrestler. He beat "AAA" placewinner Jim Andrassy at Solon before losing to Tullos in the finals. He then missed both the Richmond Hts. and Medina tourneys. What happens next? I think a return trip to Columbus. Kline gave state runner-up Hamm all he could handle at Medina before losing in overtime in the semis. He is another of Triway's fine lightweight and he, to, should make Columbus. However, with the current consolation system the five best boys often will not make it because the current method is quite arbitrary at the low placement end. Should any of these boys get an unlucky pairing Curie (Jefferson) or Linkesh (Beaver Local) would welcome the opportunity to step into their place.

McAtee was 6th last year at 132# and has done well at this weight class all year. Dotson has come on strong for the best shot at the second opening while Davis may not have improved as much. Behrens (Marysville) also could be "in the hunt" for a district finals berth. Except for McAtee nobody here worries the top boys.

Anderson heads a weak Northwest contingent, but does not seem much of a placement threat. Wazgar beat him handily at Medina. Hanchin and Hobbs are the leading candidates for the last spot. Stricker (Van Wert) is a real long shot.

The Eastern District is in a state of flux with many possible weight changes. I look for Brandon to be the leader here unless Teasdale moves back up. State qualifier Keith is up from 105# and that's a major league jump for anyone. State qualifier Takach has been quiet the past couple of years, but looks ready to challenge for a state spot now that Steubenville is back in "AA." Mickle (Washington CH) is the likely state alternate here.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE COONTZ (RAVENNA SOUTHEAST)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Cooper (Athens) | 11. Duteil (Wilmington) |
| 3. Geog (Triway) | 12. McNatt (Youngstown Ursuline) |
| 4. Welling (Akron St. Vincent) | 13. Stuckey (Greenhills) |
| 5. Stillion (Byesville) | 14. Eckert (Sandusky Perkins) |
| 6. Kessler (Port Clinton) | 15. Cantizano (Marysville) |
| 7. Jackson (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 16. Sayre (Twinsburg) |
| 8. Gangle (Medina Highland) | 17. Knull (St. Paris Graham) |
| 9. Davis (Lewistown Indian Lakes) | 18. Wenger (Columbus DeSales) |
| 10. Echols (Paulding) | 19. Barr (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| | 20. Sidon (Martin's Ferry) |

If you have been reading this report long, you know that my favorite weight class has always been 138# in "AA." Kenny Ramsay's state title last year (not a real tough call, by the way) continued my streak of never having incorrectly identified the champion in these reports. That made 16 consecutive years of being right at this weight class. Why I have been given such uncanny success here and nowhere else remains a mystery. So what happened? They eliminated the 138# class and now have ones at 135# and 140#. Next year, we'll all have to decide which of these two weights is the logical successor to 138#.

It appears that there are four or five really first rate competitors here and then there is a substantial fall-off in quality. Certainly, the clear favorite is defending state champion Mike Coontz who once at 135# has never been challenged. A two-time state qualifier, Coontz had real nailbiters in his last two bouts including an overtime bout in the finals. This year, I think his margin of victory should be greater although some uncertainties still exist. Coontz, however, is a real quality senior who has performed at a very high level for the past several years.

As always the Northeast District is crowded with quality contenders. Geog and Welling are both very tough and their semi-final bout ended indecisively when Geog won on a disqualification pretty much in spite of his objections (he wanted to continue). He was allowed to wrestle that night in the finals and won handily. Both boys are very physical and competing against them is a painful experience. Gangle looked real good at 155# and, maybe, he's found his niche at last. He has been something of a high profile figure at Highland because of his state champion brother and his perceived talent. Given the opportunity, I think he has a solid chance of qualifying and, perhaps, even placing. McNatt, Sayre and Hibbard (Revere) are all "scoped in" for that fifth spot, but clearly it won't come easily.

Cooper has tremendous ability, perhaps the equal of Coontz, but lacks the latter's long experience and poise. Nonetheless Cooper, a "AAA" state qualifier, can score points in bunches and is exceptionally dangerous. He could upset Coontz if everything flows in his direction. Watch for him. His district is strong with state qualifiers Stillion and Jackson right behind him. A promising sophomore, Sidon may not qualify this year. But he will be heard from again. Ryu (Hillsboro) may also play a role either here or at 130#.

The other three districts are all relatively weak with slim hopes of sending a potential state qualifier. The best shot might be in the Northeast where Kessler, Eckert and Echols have all shown well in the past. Pasheillich (Lexington) is another contender discovered during a search for state candidates. There seems to be a good chance that a real unknown could qualify here.

The Southwest Regional is filled with question marks. Davis had four falls in the tough Marion Harding Invitational on his way to a title, but was only 3rd in the far weaker Graham Tourney. He looks best here. Knull is up from 112# and he may drop for the tournaments. Nonetheless he has done well at this weight, and here he avoids Bible and Steele. Stuckey and Duteil are favorites for the other spots with Barr certainly in contention. Woodard (Eaton) has also done well in this area.

The Central District is again very weak. Neither Wenger or Cantizano have much placement potential. Geon (Bloom Carroll) is probably a step further behind. This is a group that folks will want to draw into.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAVE GREGAN (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2. Adkins (Bellevue) | 11. Harris (Kenston) |
| 3. Paparosa (Chanel) | 12. S. Paul (Washington CH) |
| 4. Schuppinies (Sylvania Northview) | 13. Paugh (Watkins Memorial) |
| 5. Stewart (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 14. Shumaker (Elyria West) |
| 6. Boyer (Orrville) | 15. Schmitz (Swanton) |
| 7. Jackson (Greenhills) | 16. Scott (Steubenville) |
| 8. Knight (Columbus DeSales) | 17. Sexton (Wilmington) |
| 9. Beskitt (Akron St. Vincent) | 18. Westerkamp (Cincinnati McNicholas) |
| 10. Shroyer (Lewistown Indian Lake) | 19. Renz (Brecksville) |
| | 20. Bernens (St. Charles) |

This appears to be a relatively weak weight class that should provoke a minimum of fan highlights. There are probably fewer returning state

qualifiers here than at any other "AA" weight class. One very experienced state participant is my choice, Dave Grogan, who was runner-up last year at 132#. It was a difficult overtime defeat made more bitter by a controversial stalling call. This year Grogan should have just enough to hold off Adkins and capture that coveted state title.

In the Northeast District, there are a bevy of interesting state candidates after Grogan. Paparosa has come on wonderfully well at Chanel and is a real tribute to the coaching skills there. He beat "A" champ Dernlan at Medina, won the Richmond Hts., and was 3rd at Solon. He still seems to be moving up the learning curve rapidly and that should give him a clear shot at state placement. Boyer has had a great year, too, marred only by a criteria loss to Beskitt at Doylestown. Both he and Beskitt should battle for a low place. After a marvelous sophomore year, I expected to see Harris really winning big in 1988. So far it hasn't worked out that way. But I look for better things by March. This boy is very strong. Shumaker was a regional semi-finalist last year and just failed to qualify. He'll have to beat one of those listed above to make it this year. Renz is another who so far has not done quite as well as anticipated in 1988, but has the ability to qualify.

Adkins is the class of the Norwest District which is the second best at this weight. A state quarter-finalist, he lost a 13-10 battle which cost him a place. This year, he has devastated all competition at 140# and moved up to knock off several of the good 145's. Schuppini is also excellent, and looks ready to claim the second spot. That would mean Schmitz, Ellis (Lexington) and the excellent Mengerink (Van Wert) will stay home. This is one time when this area could profitably use more than two qualifiers. Whoever is sent, they both should place.

State qualifier Stewart leads a mediocre Eastern District. Stewart lost at Barnesville, but Claymont wrestlers usually end the season strongly. Paul and Scott may be the other two qualifiers, but there are a lot of uncertainties here. Some of the 145's may drop to get away from Yetts.

The Central District does not appear to figure much in the resolution of this weight class at Columbus. Knight, in my mind, is the best here though that is not the way Columbus coaches see it. Paugh and Bernens are two other state candidates, but it's hard to see them worrying many people. Neither Knight or Paugh could make the top six at Licking Hts. which gives you some idea as to why that may be true.

The Southwest District has been in a state of flux. Jackson just dropped from 145# and won the prestigious Fairfield Invitational. That looked like a weak weight class, however. After that journeyman performers like Shroyer and Westerkamp abound. We're likely to see some new names from this area.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DUNYASHA YETTS (STEBENVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Bisesi (Akron St. Vincent) | 13. Cruze (Eaton) |
| 3. Rigel (Springfield NW) | 14. Gluck (Holy Name) |
| 4. Juhn (Fairview Park) | 15. Rausch (Marysville) |
| 5. Peters (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 16. Neiter (St. Mary Memorial) |
| 6. Laskowski (Chanel) | 17. Lichty (Revere) |
| 7. Taggart (Streetsboro) | 18. Frye (Washington CH) |
| 8. Fournier (Fostoria) | 19. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 9. Hagan (Marlington) | 20. Fleming (Sandusky Perkins) |
| 10. Thomas (Tipp City) | 21. Seitz (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 11. Harris (CAPE) | 22. Spittler (Milton Union) |
| 12. Phillips (Carrollton) | |

Dunyasha Yetts is a superb, all-around athlete who has the muscle, speed and power needed to win at this weight class. As a freshman two years ago, Yetts fought his way into the "AA" state finals before losing to a fine senior from Chanel. Last year in "AAA", he lost a one point heartbreaker in the quarterfinals and was eliminated without placing. This year you can expect to see him wrestling Saturday night once again--and this time winning. Yetts, an outstanding running back, will just be too strong for the competition---most notably the excellent Bisesi.

Yetts will emerge from a very strong Eastern District. State qualifier Peters will be there and should grab a Columbus ticket, but he does not have the muscle to go with Yetts. Phillips is currently 18-0 and won the Licking Hts. Tournament in handsome fashion. He would seem to be the logical choice for the third state berth. However, the sensational sophomore Frye has had a big year including a win over the Columbus area's top-rated 145# Rausch. He could be a threat to either Peters or Phillips.

Bisesi was wonderfully smooth winning the Medina and will be Yetts' primary competition in Columbus. A strong 5th last year at this weight, Bisesi was knocked out of the winner's bracket in the semi-finals by the defending state champ Pace. He is a deceptive wrestler in that he doesn't appear to be doing all that much, but suddenly he's six or eight points ahead. There is some drop-off below him in the Northeast District, although there are a number of solid contenders in that area. Juhn and Laskowski are both state qualifiers who wrestled only one losing round at State last year. Juhn looked excellent at Solon, but has been nursing injuries since then. He needs to reach top form quickly on his return. Laskowski is something of an enigma. He can be excellent one weekend and something much less than that the next.

He is not a particularly strong weight class so Chanel's team chances would be hugely helped by a good performance here. Taggart and Hagan are other possibilities here, but they are also vulnerable to being upset. Brunswick champ Lichty has had a solid season while Gluck has never quite reached the form he exhibited a year ago. Zoldesy (Olmsted Falls) is often overlooked, but he should be a contender.

Three state qualifiers head the Southwest District, but I like Rigel by far the best. With a real good draw and some luck, he could be a finalist. He can score points in bunches. Thomas was a surprise state qualifier last year after finishing fourth in his sectional (but as mentioned that can be an advantage with our current consolation system). This year he had a bad tournament at Tiffin, but I expect him to bounce back--at least enough to qualify. Harris is really an unknown quantity and it's difficult to even hazard a guess as to how he'll do. However, folks like Spittler, Cruze and Seitz will challenge him, and he will need to be solid for a return trip. Jackson's move down to 140# did open up a spot here.

The Northwest District is somewhat unclear. Fournier is undefeated and had a marvelous year, but his schedule is at least a little suspect. However, Gonzalez's efforts in the lower weights should show the rest of the Fostoria team what can be accomplished. Last year, Fournier probably had the shortest regional appearance of the year. It lasted a total of 14 seconds, but it will be a far different story in 1988. The virtually unknown Neiter is my second choice here, but Fleming and Paxton will challenge. Neiter tripped up Paxton 7-5 in their dual. The similarly named Crump (Bellevue) and Romp (Rossford) are also long-shots here.

The Central District is again weak. Rausch and Alvarez seem best, but have not fared particularly well outside their own area. I look for Wiseman (Columbus DeSales) to make a strong run at qualification. Nobody here will do anything at States.

1524

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JON HOLMAN (LEBANON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Richardson (St. Paris Graham) | 12. Schaffer (South Point) |
| 3. Munger (Ravenna Southeast) | 13. Barber (Beaver Local) |
| 4. Wallace (Akron Hoban) | 14. Myers (Fostoria) |
| 5. Broughton (Sandusky Perkins) | 15. Keirn (Olmsted Falls) |
| 6. Boyer (Orrville) | 16. Gunn (Warsaw River View) |
| 7. Sturgis (Middletown Madison) | 17. Westler (Marion River Valley) |
| 8. Wingrove (Vincent Warren) | 18. Jackam (Berkshire) |
| 9. Peters (Tipp City) | 19. Rich (Cambridge) |
| 10. Kelly (Loveland Hurst) | 20. Miller (Coventry) |
| 11. Russell (Whitehall) | 21. O'Brien (Bowling Green) |

This is probably the weakest weight class in "AA" competition this year and should be dominated by Jon Holman. Third last year at 145# in "AAA", he should have little trouble sweeping to victory with what opposition concentrated primarily in his home district. In fact, all four other districts are well below par here, and it may be an opportunity weight for others now at either 160# or 145#.

The Southwest is the one loaded district. Five of my top ten picks are in that area and only four can qualify. After Holman is the strong Richardson who has wrestled consistently well all year--including a high place at Medina. He lost consecutive 3-1 and 3-2 bouts in the regional last year either of which would have sent him to States with a victory. Peters was a state qualifier, but lost early. He was but fifth at Tiffin and was pinned by Broughton. Several boys may have passed him by. Sturgis has had medical problems for several years, but even as a sophomore he was outstanding. This is his last chance to qualify. Kelly has a gaudy 12-0 record with nine falls and has regional experience from last year. This is a very strong quintet especially when placed in the context of the remainder of the weight class. One will not want to draw into this group of qualifiers.

I kind of thought I had feeling about the Northeast District, but recent events suggest that I'm just about back to square one. Somehow, it seemed that Munger and Boyer were about the best to be found in this area, but the latter's 10-3 loss at the hands of Wallace makes me want to re-examine the situation. It still seems likely that wrestlers from here are the only ones who match up well with the Southwestern powers--the only question is which ones are they. I've listed Munger, Wallace and Boyer all in my top ten and they seem to have the best chance of easy qualification. Barber and Keirn seem next best, but it's a narrow advantage at best. Kenston runner-up Jackam and Wadsworth champ Miller are also good while Roberts (Akron St. Vincent) has been on the fringes of real success all year. It should be a very interesting district competition.

Broughton seems by far the best in the Northwest beating most of the good boys. Myers has also done well, but one most remember tht he was pinned by Broughton in 48 seconds at the regional last year. O'Brien and Hertzfield (Anthony Wayne) will be stiff challenges for Myers, and it will be important in terms of district team titles as to the outcome.

Wingrove has been devastating all year, but against less than top quality competition. Still, his 24-0 record must be recognized. Shaffer has only wrestled once because of South Point's problem but he was a district winner last year and a regional quarter-finalist. His ability to "get back up to speed" will be an important consideration in this district. Gunn and Rich from the other sectional should vie for the third qualification spot. They do not look that they will bring harm to anyone at the state level.

The Central District is again weak and this seems about the sixth time I've written that already. Why this normally strong area is so uncharacteristically weak seems very unusual. Either I'm under-rating their talent or they've hit one of those down cycles that periodically occurs. Of course, "A" competition in that area is now good and it may be that the switch

of some of those schools to the lower classification is part of the problem. I've listed Russell and Westler, but really the field is wide open. Kidner (Licking Valley) and even Callaghan (Columbus DeSale) could play a role here. A better guess is that some of the fine good 160's will drop here for easier pickings.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: WADE BANKER (CINCINNATI McNICHOLAS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Langdon (Uhrichsville Claymont)
3. Robinson (Akron Hoban)
4. Payne (Fairview Park)
5. Bowser (Carlisle)
6. Fouch (Circleville)
7. Martinez (Port Clinton)
8. Scavuzzo (Revere)
9. Patsolic (Chanel)
10. McGough (Van Wert)
11. Heider (Springfield NW)
12. Lindsey (Marion River Valley)
13. Wickham (Byesville Meadowbrook)
14. Reineck (Fostoria)
15. Ort (Columbus DeSales)
16. Kearns (South Point)
17. Lucas (Buckeye)
18. Latronico (Youngstown Liberty)
19. Franz (Springboro)
20. Niswonger (Hamilton Twp.)
21. Snyder (Norwalk)

Two-time state qualifier Wade Banker has participated in an interesting trio of weight classes going from 138# to 167# down to 160#. He was fourth last year at the higher weight, and this year has to be given the favorite's nod here. I don't think it will be anything like a triumphal march, but instead, will be a tough, rugged path with a number of close bouts. However, the skill and experience gained in two previous state appearances should prove to be the difference.

Banker seems to be one element in what appears to be a two-man district. Bowser, the other major ingredient, missed state qualification by a single point after winning two shutouts to reach the semi-finals. He, certainly, could place as well. After that, it's really anybody's guess as to who will grab those last two spots. If Padgett is here, he would gain a third easily, but I've listed him at 171#. Other than that, there is Heider and Franz and a tremendous number of hopefuls.

Langdon has a marvelous regional last year taking the title and that momentum held until the state quarter finals when Bisesi defeated and eliminated him. This year he holds some impressive wins such as a 10-5 victory over "A" third, Sears, and looks to be a rugged challenge to Banker. Wickham was a regional qualifier as a freshman last year and lost there by a single point to a state place winner. He won the Shadyside Invitational and was third behind Langdon and Sears at Barnesville. The third spot is, again, wide open. Kearns is a possibility, but he is wrestling a weight up because of Shaffer. Chanoski (Steubenville) and Chandler (Vinton County) are long-shots.

Robinson is the second member of that powerful Hoban trio in the middle weights. He went into the tournament process last year totally undefeated and then on successive weekends dropped bouts to those that finished first, third and fifth in the state. The last one, by a single point, cost him state qualification. He, actually, came much closer to beating Bisesi last year than Langdon did so you can kind of judge for yourself. State qualifier Payne was a strong second at Solon, but was hammered by Langdon in the first round. Scavuzzo, down from "AAA", is a solid performer who should qualify comfortably. On the other hand, Patsolic is very erratic, but when "on" can be excellent. He won the Richmond Heights Tourney. The last spot could be taken by any of a number of contenders. My favorite is the long-shot Lucas.

The Central District has four reasonable candidates here. State qualifier Fouch is nominally the best, but Lindsey and Ort are both solid challengers. Lindsey was one bout from States last year. Ort has been on the verge of success for awhile and this could be his breakthrough year. Niswonger is also capable here.

The Northwest District presents somewhat of a clouded pattern (that means I don't really know what's going on). I've listed Martinez and the kind of forgotten McGough as my top two picks. However, Reineck is rated #1 by most in his area and cannot be overlooked. Snyder is kind of a "sleeper" and I would not be at all surprised to see him get to Columbus. Kimpel (Bryan) is also another possibility.

1714

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM JACKSON (ROSSFORD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Ford (Lebanon) | 14. Cencebaugh (Carlisle) |
| 3. Staats (Norton) | 15. Clary (Bexley) |
| 4. Eddlebutte (Vincent Warren) | 16. Harner/Teece (Streetsboro) |
| 5. Bell (Fairfield Union) | 17. Trafzer (Celina) |
| 6. Holcomb (St. Clairsville) | 18. Buzbee (Eaton) |
| 7. Kohler (Fairview Park) | 19. Parsons (Beloit West Branch) |
| 8. Padgett (Mason) | 20. Sheets (Miami Trace) |
| 9. Recker (Akron Hoban) | 21. Metzler (St. Paris Graham) |
| 10. Hurlbut (Circleville) | 22. Metzler (Youngstown Ursuline) |
| 11. Rastetter (Triway) | 23. Hawkins (Lexington) |
| 12. Murphy (Hillsboro) | 24. Peet (Canfield) |
| 13. Sorma (Chanel) | 25. Davis (Bay) |

This should be one of the best and most entertaining weight classes in "AA" replete with high quality, varying styles and tough competition. In other words, everything a wrestling fan could hope for. Even team implications are present here with Lebanon, Chanel and Triway having top-notch contenders.

Heading the fine field is Tom Jackson the state runner-up at 167# last year. He dominated his half of the bracket before losing to Moore in the finals. At Kenston this year he was invincible. His district is also the weakest which should leave him far more refreshed than most of his top competition which will have to slog through highly competitive activity. Trafzer won the MVP at the Fostoria and has regional experience. Hawkins won the large Gorman Tourney with a hot hand that left a good field well behind. The question is whether that is sustainable. Giest (Anthony Wayne) is another possibility.

Ford has had an excellent season including a major victory in the Cincinnati Holiday Tournament over "AAA" state qualifier Ferguson. He just missed state qualification after being a regional semi-finalist last year. State qualifier Padgett should be at this weight along with Cencebaugh and the sophomore Buzbee. Cencebaugh has to beat off the challenge of teammate Dean just to wrestle at this weight. Metzler is a fifth possibility (for one of four spots) while Hoskins (Milton Union) and Lyons (Taylor) are just not going to be competitive enough.

Eddlebutte is becoming something of a legend around the Marietta area. He was a state qualifier as a sophomore after a brilliant season. This year he is 24-0 with victories over several state qualifiers (including Bell). He may win this thing some year on pure talent and heart. I rate him ahead of Holcomb who was fifth last year and state qualifier Murphy. This is really a great district with Sheets also in the running. Another sophomore to watch is Kelly Keenan (Steubenville) who keeps getting better and better and may overtake Murphy for that third spot. Sizemore (South Point) is another contender here.

The Columbus area features three state qualifier for only two spots. They were a combined 0-5 at St. John's Arena, but they'll do better this year--if they can get there. Bell beat Holcomb for a regional title, but then watched Holcomb snare a fifth while he came out empty-handed. He has lost only to Eddlebutte. Hurlbut should be the other qualifier unless Clary can lift himself out of something of a mini-slump. Cua (Columbus DeSales) seems overmatched here.

The Northeast District has a diverse blending of elements. Staats was a "AAA" qualifier last year and should do well at this level. Kohler just missed state qualification last year and gave Jackson a good battle losing only 7-3. Immensely strong, he is difficult to score against and he tends to wear down many opponents. Recker, after a great season, bombed out in the sectionals last year and missed district-type experience. No matter. He's good enough to overcome that defect. Rastetter, Harner and Sorma were all one bout from state qualification last year. Sorma is another Chanel wrestler who is just showing breathtaking improvement. He could very well place. Both Harner and the solid Teece are at this weight for Streetsboro so some adjustment will need to be made. Metzler, Parsons and Peet are all good and, maybe, one of them will slip into a qualifying spot.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN KEENAN (STUEBENVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Pope (Cincinnati Purcell) | 11. Parr (Hillsboro) |
| 3. Trent (Kenton) | 12. Plunkett (Carrollton) |
| 4. Bright (Chardon) | 13. Cox (Coventry) |
| 5. DeHoff (Springfield NW) | 14. Dean (Carlisle) |
| 6. Huffman (Lexington) | 15. Krause (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 7. Binkiewicz (Wintersville) | 16. Houston (Avon Lake) |
| 8. Albert (Ravenna Southeast) | 17. Jones (Port Clinton) |
| 9. Durieux (Hebron Lakewood) | 18. Peterson (Briggs) |
| 10. Larson (Fairview Park) | 19. Masters (Bellbrook) |
| | 20. Lucy (Hubbard) |

Dan Keenan has slowly but surely worked himself into the forefront of "AA" wrestling, and this should conclude with his first state title. Unlike his almost legendary brother Charlie who burst into the limelight as a sophomore. Dan has had to move forward at a slower pace. It is to his credit that the inevitable comparisons have never slowed his progress. Last year he was fourth in "AAA" losing only to Genovese and Buddie. This year he should capture a second state crown for the Keenan family.

He'll emerge from a strong district that may place a second state qualifier. Binkiewicz, like Keenan, has shown regular improvement and should be bracketed away from him at the district level. State qualifier Parr would seem to be in line for the third spot, but Plunkett looms as a strong threat. A "AAA" regional qualifier last year, he has the ability to keep Parr at home the second weekend in March.

Pope was also a "AAA" regional qualifier last year and missed a state berth by one bout. This year he has been outstanding defeating both "AA" and "AAA" opponents with equal ease. He beat Ferguson in the Holiday finals--the same wrestler who eliminated him from state contention. He dominates his area even though it consists of some good competitors. These include state qualifier DeHoff who looks to have placement potential this year. Dean, if here, and Krause are both strong while Masters may be left out despite good credentials. One figure certain to be missing is state qualifier Maratta (Kenton Ridge) who decided not to compete this year.

Shawn Trent is a true enigma. For about three minutes he is one of the strongest most powerful upperweights in the state regardless of classification. Then like a summer storm its suddenly over and he can barely move. I've heard asthma, poor conditioning and a weak schedule blamed, but whatever it is, it turns a tiger into pretty much a lamb. Last year in the very first round, he met state favorite Bowman of Bishop Ready. In the second period, Trent was well ahead and physically just taking the blocky Bowman apart, but then whatever happens, did, and Bowman triumphed 11-9. If that is corrected this

year, then Keenan and Pope and all the rest are in serious, serious trouble. Scott Huffman should be the second qualifier, assuming Trent goes, since it appears his twin brother will not be able to compete due to injury. Scott is very good, but I think his brother is actually even better. Either will represent Lexington well. Jones and Foels (Rossford) are other candidates.

The Central District is quite weak. Durieux was a bout from States as a freshman and is best here. Zezech and Peterson will battle for the last spot. Kunkler (Fairfield Union) is another possibility. But nobody here has much chance to win even a bout at state.

The Northeastern District is also not terribly strong or deep. Bright was 12-0 last year when he was forced to the sidelines, and had won the prestigious Brecksville Tourney. This year he won at Solon and is again undefeated. He doesn't appear to do whole lot, but he just keeps winning. He pinned Larson at the Solon final. Albert and state qualifier Larson also should do well, and the latter boy could play a major role in his team's final placement. This is not a terribly strong weight class and this All-Ohio running back has the potential to do well. After this trio the field is wide open. I've mentioned Cox, Houston, and Lucy, but Gaut (Navarre Fairless) and Hanni (Youngstown Ursuline) also could contend. I suspect that at least one real unknown will grab a state spot.

HVY

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF SCHERMA (CHANEL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Roy (Columbus DeSales) | 14. Schumm (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 3. Rosselot (Cincinnati McNicholas) | 15. Tipton (Orrville) |
| 4. Kelly (Elyria Catholic) | 16. Horton (Louisville) |
| 5. Weaver (Lexington) | 17. Bothwell (Mason) |
| 6. Harness (Springfield NW) | 18. Herbst (Bexley) |
| 7. Moore (Cambridge) | 19. Nickle (Brecksville) |
| 8. McCollum (Revere) | 20. Bailey (Bellevue) |
| 9. Heath (St. Clairsville) | 21. Bartell (Coshocton) |
| 10. Staley (Norwalk) | 22. Jenkins (Lewistown Indian Lake) |
| 11. Zomorowski (Twinsburg) | 23. Johnston (Copley) |
| 12. Atkins (Cincinnati Purcell) | 24. Ritchey (Kenton) |
| 13. Snyder (Byesville Meadowbrook) | 25. West (Vincent Warren) |
| | 26. Hamlin (Trinity) |

This is the last of the 39 weight classes to be written (I finished "AAA" and "A" earlier) and so, in celebration, I've decided to include all the names on my list so that everybody here gets ranked.

One of the reasons its the last weight is that there was great indecision on my part as to its eventual outcome. At year's onset, the decision seemed an easy one as the 220# Jeff Scherma was the obvious choice. After all, he had been third last year and was the slickest, most mobile heavyweight returning. He had more good "stuff" than any two "AA" heavyweights. Then something strange happened. Jeff Scherma started the year as a 250# heavyweight, and began to wrestle like all the rest of them. He showed a lot of pushing and shoving (and grunting, too) and he lost three times and looked less and less like a state champ. So then I thought about state qualifier Chris Roy, but he looked little better than last year, too. Besides, he was missing tournaments to nail down a football scholarship (who can blame him) and that always seems to divide a competitor's concentration. My next thought was Chad Weaver or Dan Kelly, but that didn't seem right either, so I've gone back to Scherma. After all, his losses have all been to "AAA" foes and maybe Jon Moore can get him back to real wrestling. Pretty sophisticated analysis, right?

A Scherma wrestling like last year will sweep through the Northeast District, but if he sticks with push and shove, he'll have plenty of trouble with Kelly. In my mind, he should have been a state qualifier, but an unfortunate disqualification sidetracked him. This year he'll give everyone a battle because he's so difficult to score against. After that duo, the qualification race is wide open with "AAA" qualifier McCollum, "AA" qualifier Zomorowski and Horton the nominal favorites. However, Nickle is tough and Tipton beat an impressive group of heavies at Smithville. Several others are listed who could challenge.

Roy should totally dominate the Central District by merely showing up. Nobody else in that area is within ten points of him. Herbst and Neff (Watterson) are next in line looking at the one qualifying berth. Several other heavyweights of about equal quality are also present.

The Southwestern District has good depth and quality. Rosselot was sixth last year while Harness also qualified. Bothwell was the state alternate while Schumm recently won the prestigious Fairfield Invitational and also had the most pins as well. Atkins and Jenkins are other possibilities. Rosselot has an outside chance at being a finalist.

The Eastern District will see some of the fiercest battles for state qualification. Tom "Tank" Moore was a "AAA" regional qualifier and is undefeated so far this campaign. He is a most formidable opponent. State qualifier Heath lost to "AA" runner-up Pullins 14-9 in the regional finals, but struck out at the state losing to Rosselot in the first round. Sectional champ Bartell lost by three to Roy in the quarter-finals and then fell out when Roy defaulted in the semis (the consolation rules make me so angry). Snyder had two opportunities for state qualification, but lost them both on a busy Saturday afternoon. Finally, the wonderfully named Adam West has been sensational all year, but has not gone against the level of competition he'll find here. Remember, only three of this quintet will qualify.

Weaver has lost only once to "AAA" stalwart Burwell by but a single point. Some days in January I thought he might be champ. Staley is a well kept secret who has devastated some good opposition. He'll jump all over the unwary. State qualifier Bailey would seem left out in this area, but he wasn't a favorite last year and did very well. Ritchey has hopes as well.

TEAMS

1. Chanel -- Again, as in "AAA", the defending champions lack their usual quota of individual stars, but have a great number of possibilities. Scherma and Nero are the big names, but neither have done quite as well as expected so far this year. On the other hand, Eves, Sorma and, particularly, Paparosa have shown state scoring potential. What this team really needs is for the experienced Sasso and Laskowski to come through at tourney time. All in all, just as in the past two years, they should have just enough to win.
2. Lebanon -- One of the great secrets in "AA". This team has a quartet of excellent wrestlers who under the right circumstances could lead their school to a team title. Clark, Boulton, Holman and Ford are all excellent and each has the potential to be a finalist. However, there are no backups or other hopes so even one misstep is likely to fatally damage their championship chances.
3. Columbus DeSales -- This team is built around Marinelli and Roy along with capable assistance of Rogers. The weak Central District gives this team plenty of chances to qualify others like Acklin, Wenger, Knight or Ort. The problem will be getting them to score at the state level. If they can't accomplish this, they'll fall out of the top five.
4. Akron St. Vincent -- They have two fine individual stars in Shocklee and Bisesi with back up help from Welling, Beskitt and, perhaps, even Frechette. If everything went perfectly, they could go as high as third. Bisesi and Yetts could go head-to-head for both a title and for team placement.
5. Staubenville -- Another team that needs support for its top contenders. Yetts and Keenan should both win titles, but other help is not so clear cut. McGee and the two Scotts could provide some, but the issue is in serious doubt.
6. Fairview Park -- This is a team that could finish first or forty-first. They have five excellent wrestlers, all of whom have state potential--far more than any of the teams, but Chanel. The problem will be to convert this potential into points. Tullos, Juhn, Payne, Kohler and Larson are all good, but unlike the teams ahead of them, they have no sure finalists.

7. Medina Highland -- Another team with strong upward potential. Letzner is super and should win. Hill, Grumbling and Wazgar may also do well with some breaks. A key might be Gangle who looks to be really progressing and might be a major surprise at tourney time.
8. Twinsburg -- State runners-up, Gegan and Zamiska, are the core of this team and they need to do at least as well this year for this team to move up. The real keys, though, are state qualifiers Futo and Zomorowski who have been far too silent early this season. Sayre, if he can get there, could really help.
9. Ravenna Southeast -- They are not the great dual meet team we've seen in the past, but they have quite a bit of scoring potential. Coontz is an almost sure champ and a healthy Albert and Munger can put points on the board. Bailey needs a late-season surge to help while somehow, somebody (Marty Coontz?) needs to pitch in.
10. Rossford -- Just two stars, but both are truly outstanding. Jackson should win it all and McCumber can be a finalist since he'll be bracketed away from Ciancola. If Foels or Romp can score a little, that's a real bonus.
11. Uhrichville Claymont -- They return four state qualifiers and Langdon could be a finalist. It remains to be seen if Peters, Jackson or Stewart can also score. So far, the two previous Peters boys have placed senior year so they have tradition on their side.
12. Cincinnati McNicholas -- Banker and Rosselot are about all there is here, but that should be worth close to 40 points. Maybe Westerkamp can somehow help.
13. St. Paris Graham -- The lightweights Randall and Abbott could do damage in the early rounds and Richardson should certainly place. A lot will depend on getting Knull at the right weight and qualifying Metzler.
14. Triway -- A team with a lot of opportunities, but the major question is whether their good wrestlers can score at the state level. The excellent middleweights of Woods, Withrow, Kline, and Geog are anchored by the last member who could be a finalist. Add in Rastetter and with a good performance they could be a Top Ten team.

A

This classification has been most changed by the new system which divides all schools with wrestling teams into three equal divisions. The change was long overdue and will enhance wrestling in all three classifications. However, "A", certainly, benefits the most. No longer will it be treated like an unwanted stepchild when it comes to format, and it now reaps all of the qualification and placement benefits of the larger schools. In addition, a state champion in "A" will now have won a competition that is both important and competitive. It will be a championship won against good quality wrestlers from all around the state not over just a few dozen boys from the traditional wrestling schools as in the past.

1031

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT ZAPADKA (CARDINAL STRITCH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Gibson (Cadiz) | 12. V. Nguyen (Archbold) |
| 3. Smith (Richmond Hts.) | 13. Butin (West Jefferson) |
| 4. Mattin (Delta) | 14. Lambdin (Black River) |
| 5. Bollin (Ottawa Hills) | 15. Grau (Lockland) |
| 6. Smales (Bishop Ready) | 16. Kowatch (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 7. Kline (Union Local) | 17. Gracefo (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 8. Quayle (Huron) | 18. Roeder (New London) |
| 9. Schneider (Wauseon) | 19. Zeno (Margaretta) |
| 10. Fullman (Madeira) | 20. Jefferies (Galion Northmor) |
| 11. DePhillips (Aurora) | 21. Roginsky (Brooklyn) |

There should be a fascinating mix of styles, sizes and backgrounds at this weight class. There is so little past record matching many of these contenders that much of this analysis will have to rely on the intuitive and, maybe even, the occult.

One surety is that for depth and quality the Northwest District is unmatched. Fortunately they do send five qualifiers, but since it will be from one district and with the old consolation system the best five may not necessarily see Columbus. My choice, Scott Zapadka, is from that district and he is the defending "AA" champ from 98#. However, he has already been tested by two-time state qualifier Bollin (who he beat by one point) and his will not be a totally stress-free path. Quayle also qualified in "AA" while Nguyen went to State in "A". In addition, Schneider and Mattin were Regional "AA" qualifiers last year. This is a power packed sextet and at least one will not make it to Columbus. This competition will certainly hone Zapadka for the challenges at State, but he has the poise and skill to win again. The other five all have a chance to place, although I like Mattin's chances best. Still,

Quayle upset him last year and could well do it again. Schneider, 8-8 as a junior, has come on strong winning several tourneys including the prestigious Rogers Invitational. Nguyen won the "A" Classic, but he may not match up well with those ranked above him here. He may have to really struggle to qualify. Roeder also has an outside chance here as do Adelsperger (Tiffin Calvert) and Zeno (Margaretta). They will benefit if the draw is one-sided or the consolation system works against some of the better boys.

Gibson lost the state title on a criteria decision in overtime last year and it was about as close as you would want to see. Cadiz has had a state finalist at the first "A" weight four straight years now and that is truly an amazing string which Gibson should extend. Kline will be his chief rival in the Eastern District and has a shot at a low place. They stand unchallenged as the two best at this weight in their area.

Smith was third in "A" last year and he has wrestled well this season finishing third at both Brunswick and Richmond Heights. DePhillips looks to be his closest rival as witnessed by their one point dual bout. Still, Smith has a big edge in experience. You'll note that only two Northeastern wrestlers are ranked in the top thirteen and I may be undervaluing the talent here. Most of the remainder like Lambdin, Kowatch, Gracefo and Roginsky wrestle extremely tough schedules by "A" standards in other parts of the State. The records are not as impressive but they may do better than presently forecasted. Kowatch, in particular, looks to be improving on almost a daily basis. A long-shot here might be Ducca (Kirtland) as the last two qualifying spots are really wide open.

Smales and Butin dominate the Columbus area and should easily qualify. Smales may well play an important role in the team competition and he has exhibited some impressive firepower. He dropped a close decision to Bollin and won the St. John Invitational. Butin is easily second best here with Jefferies and Lunquest (Marion Pleasant) well behind.

The Southwestern District has little depth, but Fullman and Grau could surprise. Last year Fullman won a match at Columbus while Grau was a state alternate. They might not wrestle enough rugged competition to sustain a winning streak, but they could be tough in one bout. The third qualifier is risking life and limb in Columbus. Stout (Brookville) may be an exception to that last thought.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: NICK CIANCIOLA (GENOA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Heavilin (Cadiz) | 13. Mangan (Jamestown Greeneview) |
| 3. Long (Liberty Center) | 14. Musgrave (Covington) |
| 4. M. Dernlan (West Liberty Salem) | 15. Conry (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 5. D. DiSabato (Bishop Ready) | 16. Johnson (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 6. Douce (Bluffton) | 17. Colvin (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 7. Bliss (Aurora) | 18. Skolaris (Cardinal) |
| 8. Frohnapfel (Bridgeport) | 19. Williams (West Jefferson) |
| 9. McKenna (Chagrin Falls) | 20. Kimmnet (Delphos St. John) |
| 10. T. Nguyen (Archbold) | 21. Mauser (Brooklyn) |
| 11. Parsley (Bethel Tate) | 22. Weyrick (Bellaire St. John) |
| 12. Guilford (Ayresville) | 23. Watson (Belpre) |

A weight class that defending state champion Nick Cianciola should dominate and where two high visibility freshman make their state debut. As I said last year, Cianciola really ought to be competing in "AAA" (where he would be the favorite at this weight) rather than over-matching most of his competition here. A brilliant takedown artist, his only real threats are carelessness and boredom. If he retains his concentration, he'll end most of his matches via technical fall. In fact, his most interesting bout may well be with the two freshman stars, Dernlan and DiSabato, who will "shoot the works" if they meet him on the tourney trail. After all, they'll have nothing to lose in such a contest.

Again the Northwest District is loaded even after accounting for Cianciola. Long has been fourth and third the last two years, but cannot match Cianciola on his feet. He dominated the "A" Classic and was a solid fourth at Medina. Douce will eventually drop to 112# and he will play a major role in its outcome. A state qualifier as a sophomore two years ago, this part-time gymnast can be expected to do the unexpected. He is someone who bears close watching. Guilford, a two-time state qualifier, and Nguyen, a qualifier last year, have careers going in separate directions. Nguyen contrives to get better while Guilford is standing still losing in the quarter finals of the "A" Classic and going into overtime to garner a third. A third state shot may be at risk, although his long experience should preserve that honor. After that the quartet of state qualifier Colvin, Kimmnet, Conry and Baranek (Huron) are all aimed at that final state berth.

Heavilin was a one-point loser in the state finals last year and he defeated Long by six points in the semis. So far this year he has not shown peak form--losing to Dernlan the first week. However, he and state fourth placer Frohnapfel are still the class of the district, although the rapidly improving Weyrick may be an upset factor at tourney time. State qualifier Merryman is expected at 119# once back from injury, but should he appear, it would certainly make for a real dogfight for the two qualifying spots.

Dernlan and DiSabato are two freshman with outstanding records and great family traditions. Both could place at this weight after winning district titles in their respective areas. It will be interesting to see how fast they race up the learning curve by season's end. State qualifiers Mangan and Musgrave may be relatively small threats to Dernlan in the Southwest, but Parsley may be the most trouble of all. DiSabato is almost unopposed in Columbus. The one unclear point is Watson who has not wrestled this year due to injury, but did very well last year in "AA" competition.

Bliss and McKenna head the Northeast District contingent and rate far ahead of other area competitors. Bliss nipped Dernlan by a point at Medina while he and McKenna drew in a much watched dual. Both have placement potential. After that it's strictly "by guess and by golly" as a half dozen candidates vie for that two state berths. Based on performance, state qualifier Skolaris may be in real qualifying trouble. Johnson, who is a streaky wrestler, will be right in that battle especially if it catches him on one of his "hot" weekends. Mauser is another possibility as are Huber (Open Door) and Redd (Woodridge). Even Torzok (Perry) has a chance here as pairings will be a real key.

119f

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KYLE KERN (LIBERTY CENTER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. McDaniel (West Liberty Salem) | 12. Abbruzzese (Grandview Hts.) |
| 3. Jaksetic (Cardinal Stritch) | 13. Merryman (Shadyside) |
| 4. Neikirk (Cardinal) | 14. DeShetler (Bishop Ready) |
| 5. Bozicevic (Cadiz) | 15. Grilley (Mapleton) |
| 6. Nicely (Blanchester) | 16. Plank (Bethel-Tate) |
| 7. Manger (West Jefferson) | 17. Breudigan (Oberlin) |
| 8. Kot (Woodridge) | 18. Drayton (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| 9. Hoffman (Fremont St. Joseph) | 19. Lipold (Richmond Hts.) |
| 10. Lyle (Bridgeport) | 20. McCauley (Wellsville) |
| 11. Timmons (Kansas Lakota) | 21. Aiken (Arcadia) |
| | 22. Rismiller (Versailles) |

This is a power packed weight class that features two defending state champs and two state runners-up. In addition, there are six other former state qualifiers making this the strongest weight class in "A". It's reasonably unusual to have defending champs matching up (although it happened with Bonaventura and Hanson last year), and even rarer when the favorite's role goes to a third party altogether. Still, for the third time in four years, I'm selecting Kyle Kern to capture that elusive state crown. One of these times we're bound to get it right and I'm hoping it's 1988 since Kern is now a senior. Liberty Center has never had a state titleist even though they've had a fine "A" wrestling tradition under Rex Lingruen. It would certainly be

appropriate if Kern or Dean (see 135#) were to capture the first after four brilliant years of competition. Kern seems to have overcome the injury jinx that plagued him in past years and his only losses have been at the mammoth Medina Tourney. Both defeats were epic struggles against highly rated "AAA" contenders, and he defeated state champion McDaniel there as well. This is Kern's last opportunity to become a state champion, and should he win it in 1988 it will certainly be a crown well earned.

Kern and Jaksetic (sixth at 119# in "AA") look to dominate the Northwest District. Jaksetic has had a strong season and he has wrestled tougher competition than most of the other "A" wrestlers in this area. He should be a solid test for Kern. Hoffman, a former state qualifier and down from 125#, has had a power packed year running up some big scores. His only loss was a criteria decision to the tough Timmons. After this quartet, the quality drops off substantially with Drayton, Aiken and Mitchell (Gibsonburg) at the next plateau.

Defending state champion McDaniel cannot be overlooked at this weight. His sixth place performance at Medina indicated more about the strength of that weight class than his own efforts. Kern beat him by only two points and that is his only "A" loss. Besides, West Liberty Salem wrestlers seem to peak just about at tourney time, and the rugged schedule they wrestle gives them a strong edge over most of the other competition. McDaniel may not successfully defend, but he will not be easily defeated. Nicely was a "AA" regional finalist and state qualifier last season and will play an important role in the resolution of this weight class. Look for him to place. The third qualify will probably be Plank, although Rismiller is a strong potential threat. Wesbecher (Sidney Lehman) and Gadbury (Batavia) are only distant threats.

Another defending state champ, Tom Neikirk, heads the Northeastern contingent. Cardinal wrestlers peaked at the end of last season as three won state titles in a surprising show of power. Neikirk has struggled a bit at this weight so far this year, but cannot be overlooked at tourney time. Kot, a move-in from Hudson, was one bout from state qualification in "AAA" last year. He is an unknown factor at this level and it will be interesting to chart his progress. State qualifier Grilley, Breudigan and Lipold are all potential qualifiers and, again, they may well do better than currently ranked.

Former state runner-up, Abbruzzese, heads the Columbus contingent, but his qualification is by no means a certain thing. After finishing second at 98# as a sophomore, Abbruzzese was only 14-8 last year and lost decisively in the first round of States. He has looked stronger this year, but has been passed by Manger and is being pushed by DeShetler. The latter boy could play a strong role in Ready's hopes for a team title. If he can get to state competition, he can score there. Manger has been very good all year and he may be even better than his current ranking. Watson (Belpre), the other twin, could also be a factor in what should be a strong district competition.

Equally strong will be the battle for two spots in the Eastern District. Bozicevic was fourth last year and just recently dropped to 119#. He has done very well at the higher weight, and is an experienced and rugged opponent. Lyle came on strong at the end of last season and lost a state berth by one point to eventual state runner-up Heavilin. His only loss to date was to McDaniel. Merryman, a state qualifier at 105#, has missed the entire year so far and his eventual return is still unsure. I would expect him back at this weight and he will have real problems beating out either Bozicevic or Lyle. McCauley, Parker (Toronto) and McManus (Barnesville) are all excellent competitors and may look to the somewhat easier 125# class at tourney time.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TIM BURNS (CINCINNATI READING)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Myers (Sandusky St. Mary) | 12. Lopez (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 3. Case (Cadiz) | 13. Nutter (Covington) |
| 4. Sarver (Bishop Ready) | 14. Miller (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| 5. Musarra (Richmond Hts.) | 15. Hartzler (Ontario) |
| 6. Tim Nye (Edgerton) | 16. Ucker (Johnstown Monroe) |
| 7. Elter (Kansas Lakota) | 17. Mamere (Huron) |
| 8. Jackson (West Salem Northwestern) | 18. Voisard (Versailles) |
| 9. Shannon (Madeira) | 19. Haas (McComb) |
| 10. Semrad/Grossman (Hawken) | 20. Thompson (New Albany) |
| 11. Schott (Waterford) | 21. Brininger (Ledgement) |

This is a solid weight class that in the media would be termed "too close to call". It features ten returning state qualifiers and a defending state champion. All in all it should provide some close, interesting wrestling and a headache for those trying to forecast an eventual winner.

My choice is Tim Burns, three times a "AA" state quarter-finalist who has yet to win in that second round and show what he can really do in Columbus. In this case, maybe it's the fourth time that will be the charm for this fine wrestler. His only weakness may be in the bottom position where he has had trouble getting out in the past. I look for him to overcome this second round jinx and go on to capture his first state crown. If so, it will probably be his experience and poise that will carry him to victory in a number of close bouts with outstanding challenges from all around the state.

Burns, however, should be pretty much in charge of the Southwest District despite the presence of two other state qualifiers, Shannon and Nutter. In fact, this latter duo may have problems duplicating their past success with Voisard and Calloway (Jamestown Greeneview) just two possible challengers. Except for Burns, it is unlikely that anyone else from this area will place.

Myers will be one of the most severe tests Burns will face. In fact, I thought long and hard before bypassing Myers who has compiled an exceptional record. In state competition he has finished third-second-third losing only to two-time state champ Bonaventura (twice) and four-time state champ Hanson in Columbus. This year he began the season at 135# and dropped two classes for eventual state certification. He is well primed for his last shot at a state title.

The Northwestern District is loaded with great competitors. Elter, a new face on the scene, has had a very successful campaign culminating in an impressive Van Buren title. Nye, also a state qualifier, had four consecutive falls at the "A" Classic and has thrust himself into the placement picture with that performance. After this trio, the quartet of the excellent Lopez, Hartzler, Mamere and Haas all deserve attention for the last two qualifying spots. Even Keegan (Margaretta) and Swartzmiller (Hopewell-Loudon) could play a role in that particular outcome. Incidentally, Hopewell-Loudon with Swartzmiller at 125# and Beidelschies at 130# win the award for the longest back-to-back names in the state.

Former state champ Reed Case is now a junior and he has gone first-third the past two years. He, too, recently dropped to 125# and should be yet another outstanding competitor at this weight. He is the last link in the Cadiz chain that opens with four wrestlers all of whom have placed at the state level and three of whom were finalists. Schott, fourth at 112# last year, is an easy choice for the second qualifying spot, but I anticipate that several of the excellent wrestlers from the crowded 119# class may move up to challenge him.

State qualifier, Sarver, is way ahead of anyone else in his district. While most of the other top contenders must overcome at least some district resistance, all of Sarver's battles will be at the state level. The other qualifier, be it Ucker, Thompson or Johnson (Belpre), will not win a state bout.

State qualifiers Musarra and Jackson are the Northeast District's best hope for a place, but even that goal may be almost unreachable. Semrad has the kind of skills that on a hot weekend could vault him over many of the more highly rated boys. He needs to be closely watched. Miller is a narrow choice for the fourth spot, but there are a number of other, almost equally likely possibilities. Bringer, for example, may be the best Ledgement has to offer this year and is certainly their best shot for qualification.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ADAM DiSABATO (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Everett (West Salem Northwestern) | 12. Chamblin (Beallsville) |
| 3. Woods (Wellsville) | 13. Peck (Gibsonburg) |
| 4. Sonner (Hicksville) | 14. Beidelshies (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 5. Crytzer (Richmond Hts.) | 15. Grossman (Hawken) |
| 6. Furko (Archbold) | 16. Bibart (Marion Pleasant) |
| 7. Hiltibran (West Liberty Salem) | 17. Wacker (Firelands) |
| 8. Tom Nye (Edgerton) | 18. Stasiulewicz (Toronto) |
| 9. Kunes (Brooklyn) | 19. Weigandt (Sidney Lehman) |
| 10. Unkefer (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 20. Klima (Huron) |
| 11. Frye (Bethel-Tate) | 21. Hess (Springfield NE) |

This is a weight class that will be totally dominated by defending state champ Adam DiSabato. DiSabato was second in the USWF Nationals (behind Fried) and has finished fifth-third-first in his first three years of high school competition. Despite several excellent competitors here, no one will come within 10 points of DiSabato--who is one of the best senior wrestlers in Ohio. Brilliant on his feet, he will pretty much do as he pleases in this classification. The other qualifier in his district--probably either Bibart or Longshirt (Olentangy)--will not win a bout at the States.

Two-time state qualifier Everett, a junior, is one of those natural wrestlers who make everything look easy. Marvelously talented, he will confound all of the opposition except DiSabato. Next year will be his season, as the best he can hope for here is the runner-up spot. The rapidly improving Crytzer is in line for a low place this year, and this rugged sophomore also has great potential. Four-time state champ Hanson singled Crytzer out when he was an eighth grader as a potential superstar. Kunes and Unkefer are probably the top candidates for the last two berths. But the virtually unknown Wacker and Grossman will be stiff opposition. Skoczen (Cuyahoga Hts.) and Ress (Rootstown) are other possibilities.

State qualifier Woods was the Outstanding Wrestler of the Shadyside Invitational and that appears to signal his total return from injuries. Free of health problems, Woods is a fearsome competitor and a solid performer. He dropped a two-point decision to state runner-up Todd Dean in last year's semi-finals, and then an overtime battle to Herb Adkins. The right draw makes him a finalist here. Chamblin is probably the best shot for the second spot, but as in the two previous districts, there is a real chasm between the first place choice and all the rest. Stasiulewicz, the name I'd least like to use on our telecasts, also has a reasonable chance to qualify.

Atypically, the Northwest District is not particularly strong at this weight. State qualifiers Sonner and Furko are the two best with both having good seasons to date. Sonner lost a tight 3-1 decision to Todd Burk in a contest to determine a state place. He should be in line for one this year. I felt sorry for Furko last year when he dropped a heartbreaking 1-0 OT decision in the first round and then got "chewed out" by his coach as well. This year he captured the "A" Classic in fine style. Nye, Peck and Beidelschies have the best shot at the last two state openings but the competition will be very close. Klima leads a whole batch of other contenders that also includes the improving Ohl (Ontario) for the last two spots.

The Southwest District is not particularly strong and I anticipate Hiltibran dropping down to 130# to lead the qualifying group. Along with Frye those are the best chances for state placement from this area. After that the picture is murky and almost anyone could grab the third berth.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: HERB ADKINS (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Dean (Liberty Center) | 12. Vcelka (Union Local) |
| 3. O'Reilly (Bishop Ready) | 13. Flanagan (Avon) |
| 4. Sabo (Cadiz) | 14. Carey (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. Durbin (Gallion Northmor) | 15. Enderle (Hillsdale) |
| 6. Ewry (Coldwater) | 16. Ryan (Huron) |
| 7. Toke (Garrettsville Garfield) | 17. Kimmel (Covington) |
| 8. Moore (Delta) | 18. Workman (Ledgement) |
| 9. Finneran (Sandusky St. Mary) | 19. O'Dell (Brookville) |
| 10. Davidson (Cincinnati Reading) | 20. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) |
| 11. Desburg (Chagrin Falls) | 21. Cameron (North Baltimore) |

This a relatively weak weight class that should be dominated by two outstanding wrestlers. The gap between Adkins and Dean and the rest of the field is wide and not likely to be bridged by any wrestler. Adkins may appear to be a surprising choice since Dean beat him by four points in the first round at Columbus last year. I think Adkins had made up those four points in the past 12 months and his outstanding season vaults him into the favorite's role. However, that is a most tenuous advantage and one which Dean could easily close on any given day. Let's hope these two are bracketed apart because their bout should be high scoring, close and exciting.

The quality in the Northeast falls off dramatically after Adkins, Toke and Desburg have had strong seasons and might somehow capture a low place. The feisty Flanagan, Enderle and Workman are even farther down the ladder and their goals ought to be focused strictly on qualifying. Cornacchione (Kirtland) is another potential state candidate.

Dean, the first wrestler ever to capture four "A" Classic titles, towers over a somewhat stronger field that Adkins faces. Dean, second last year, has now placed twice at State and his only losses this year were at the tough Medina tourney. State qualifier Ewry wrestles a weak schedule in an out-of-the-way area, but he has shown solid talent in the past. He is, however, not upset proof. Moore and Finneran are two other strong qualification candidates while Ryan will lead a whole host of other wrestlers looking for a state shot. Others in this group are Cameron, Tyson, Mack (Ayersville), Racer (Ottawa Glandorf) and Jernigan (Archbold).

O'Reilly and Durbin head what looks to be a solid Central contingent. It's difficult to know if they are rated correctly since they have wrestled schedules that have given few comparable match-ups. My feeling is that both of them have place potential; primarily due to some impressive outings against "AA" and "AAA" competition. Should this assessment be accurate, it would shut the door on Carey, Ellis (Columbus Academy) and Spencer (Belpre).

I've had a lot of trouble finding two good 135's out of the Eastern District. Sabo is certainly a strong candidate for one spot, but there doesn't seem to be much depth below him. Vcelka is a possibility and, perhaps, we'll see a couple of 140#ers move down. Otherwise Smith (Beallsville) might be the only other choice.

The Southwest District also seems thin on talent at this weight class. I've listed Davidson who did very well in the Coaches Holiday Classic, Kimmel and O'Dell. Again, it is likely that there are better candidates than this, but, so far, they haven't made themselves known to me.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Houser (Milan Edison) | 11. Radcliffe (New London) |
| 3. Miller (Oak Harbor) | 12. Mendoza (Gibsonburg) |
| 4. Lapinski (Black River) | 13. Ready (Garrettsville Garfield) |
| 5. Raver (Licking Hts.) | 14. Lewis (Cadiz) |
| 6. Ackerman (Cardinal Stritch) | 15. Avila (Margaretta) |
| 7. LaMotte (Bridgeport) | 16. Nery (Columbiana) |
| 8. Campolieti (Richmond Hts.) | 17. Kingrey (Versailles) |
| 9. O'Harra (Grandview Hts.) | 18. Haffner (Beallsville) |
| 10. Willenbrink (Middletown Fenwick) | 19. Berry (Galion Northmor) |
| | 20. Rosas (Perry) |

This is a weight class bursting with journeymen wrestlers, but one with little top-side strength--with the obvious exception of Dernlan. What that means is furious competition at virtually every level of competition because there is little differentiation between most of the contestants. What it also portends is a relatively easy second title for Dernlan, the one really outstanding wrestler at this weight class. One of the classiest seniors in the state, Dernlan had a bad tourney at Medina finishing fourth. But it undoubtedly toughened him for the remainder of the season. He should have little trouble defending and finish off his last three years with a third-first.

Dernlan's district is weak with Willenbrink and Kingrey nominally the two best bets to accompany him to Columbus. They will not worry anyone at that level of competition. Other possibilities are Coffman (New Lebanon Dixie) and Robinson (Lockland).

If Dernlan is to be challenged, it will come from the Northwest District. Regional "AA" champ and state quarter-finalist Houser is extremely good and may have enough firepower to at least catch Dernlan's attention. He has devastated every opponent so far this year. Miller was very impressive at Medina losing to Barto by only two points, and he was a strong second at Northwood. His brother, you may recall, took home two state titles. Ackerman, too, has done well and may be reasonably close to Miller if not Houser. He could grab a low place. Behind this trio are another half-dozen solid competitors who typify the character of this entire weight class. I like "A" Classic champ Radcliffe, Mendoza and Avila. I believe Mendoza has real potential, but it may not emerge quickly enough. Other possibilities are Martz (Archbold), Fabrizio (Tiffin Calvert) and Baker (Fostoria St. Wendelin).

State qualifier Lapinski leads the Northeastern contingent and he certainly has the skills for some kind of placement. However, the wrestler I really like is the junior, Campolieti, who is making some giant strides toward district leadership. He was second at Richmond Hts. and fourth at Brunswick. Ready is part of a solid Garrettsville middleweight line-up while Nery and Rosas look toward that last qualifying spot. Ice (Apple Creek Waynedale), Wohleber (Columbia Station) and Johnson (Manchester) have had enough success to warrant mention here.

The Central District has state qualifier Raver and state alternate O'Harra at the top of the form charts. Raver should place, but O'Harra will have to perform at the top of his game to do likewise. Hill and Brust (Bishop Ready) are not so far behind that they will not have upset hopes at the district level.

The Eastern District is unusually weak. I've rated LaMotte seventh, but that may be giving him the benefit of the doubt. After a solid sophomore season he dropped wrestling last year and sat our his junior year. He has done well against relatively weak competition so far, but whether that is sustainable is open to question. He did beat "AA" state qualifier Stewart in the Barnesville final. Certainly one advantage is having both Burks in the room to work with. Lewis, who had to go up when Sabo dropped, may challenge as will Shadyside winner Hafner. Irish Invitational winner Shepherd (Shadyside) and Redish (Jefferson Union) are also strong enough to do well at this class.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD BURK (BRIDGEPORT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Moran (Versailles)
3. Zehe (Kirtland)
4. Ebert (Apple Creek Waynedale)
5. Badenhop (Delta)
6. Moyer (Casstown Miami East)
7. Blackburn (Licking Hts.)
8. Martinez (Mt. Blanchard Riverdale)
9. Thatcher (Bishop Ready)
10. Losie (Oak Harbor)
11. C. Alloway (Bergholz Springfield)
12. Lippert (Kansas Lakota)
13. Rocchi (Cadiz)
14. Loftis (Springfield Cath Cent)
15. S. Mamere (Huron)
16. Studer (Norwayne)
17. Anderson (Hopewell Loudon)
18. Wholf (Grand River)
19. Seifert (Beallsville)
20. Jones (Granville)
21. Edwards (North Union)

This is possibly the weakest weight in "A" and has little to recommend it except to those middleweights looking to find the easiest route to state qualification. I've had trouble scrounging up twenty names to rank and that's really a bad sign. Usually I have a ton of names at weak classes because everybody looks good compared to the competition. Even compared to minimal standards here there is trouble finding acceptable candidates.

Partially filling this vacuum is Todd Burk, fourth last year at 126#, who has moved up to just the right weight class. Burk is a tough scrappy wrestler --not especially good on his feet, but like most "river" wrestlers very good on the mat. His style contrasts with that of the high-scoring Moran, his chief rival, but he should win wrestling a down-tempo match and controlling his opponent. In fact, one of the few charms of this weight class is the variety of style it will showcase. Alloway looks to be the second qualifier after last season where he bounced from weight to weight. Rocchi is the back-up choice to Alloway while Seifert (Beallsville) may also contend.

Moran likes 19-16 or 12-10 bouts and that can get dangerous at the state level. A state qualifier last year, Moran got outscored in the first round (12-8) and eliminated. He should do much better this year. He leads the strongest district which also includes state qualifier Moyer and the improving Loftis. The latter boy is now 19-1 with a boatload of quick falls. If he meets Moran, they'll probably need an adding machine to keep score. Day (Cincinnati County Day) is another high scoring wrestler who could break into the top three while Leach (Cincinnati Reading) may be that solid type of wrestler who negates the offensive potential of wrestlers like Moran, Loftis and Day.

The Northeast District is divided into two unequal parts. The first group is only two in number and contains Zehe (fourth last year at 138#) and Ebert, the tough senior who looked so good at Medina. They should pretty much have things their own way at this district. The second group is everybody else at 145#. That makes it mere speculation as to whom the last two qualifiers will be. I've listed Wholf and Studer, but there are at least five others with equally good chances. An intriguing contestant is All-Ohio linebacker Pastua (Mogadore) who appears set to wrestle at this weight. At any rate, this second duo will simply be bracket fillers at Columbus.

Blackburn returns for a second attempt at state placement at 145# and this time his chances look reasonable. Last year he lost his opening bout 16-3 and never got a second chance. This time he should do much better. Thatcher is not rated in the Columbus, but I like his chances against this level of competition. His recent third at the St. Johns Invitational showed some promise. Jones is the standard choice for the second qualifying spot, but I see him being squeezed out by Thatcher. Edwards is yet another possible contender.

The Northeast District seems in total disarray. No one has taken command of this weight class, and, in fact, I've switched the ratings here at least three or four times in the last week. Right now Badenhop is at the top of the heap with the inexperienced, but promising Martinez behind him. Then Losie, Lippert, Mamere and Anderson form a second, virtually as strong, group. A wrestler to watch might be Losie who could really move up on a hot weekend. Other possibilities include Neiter (Coldwater), Miller (Archbold) and Wyse (Stryker). A lot of names here, but, likely, very few place winners.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DEAN BURK (BRIDGEPORT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Johnson (Carey)
3. Soehnlen (Louisville Aquinas)
4. Adkinson (Oak Harbor)
5. Carver (Bethel-Tate)
6. Boehm (Licking Hts.)
7. Heinze (Wauseon)
8. Roth (Seneca East)
9. Hummel (Brookville)
10. Kemp (Oberlin)
11. Rapp (Madeira)
12. Rickard (Bloomdale Elmwood)
13. Briseno (Ayresville)
14. Born (Perry)
15. Daugherty (Richmond Hts.)
16. Linder (Belpre)
17. Russell (Union Local)
18. Wright (Columbus Academy)
19. Gillson (Bellville Clear Fork)
20. Quigley (Kirtland)
21. Pasiuk (Bergholz Springfield)

Yet another weak weight class that features but three returning state qualifiers and only one state placewinner. However, that one placewinner, Dean Burk, has compiled an enviable record finishing fourth-second-third during this first three varsity seasons. It doesn't take much of a numerologist to recognize that pattern, which suggests that the long-awaited state title may finally be at hand for Burk. It would also mark the third consecutive year that brothers would capture state crowns in the same year. Certainly, back-to-back triumphs by the Burks combined with an expected repeat title by Burlenski would make Bridgeport a strong contender for the team title that they missed by 12 points last year.

Burk should have things pretty much his own way in the Eastern District with Pasiuk and Russell currently the chief contenders. However, with three top-notch wrestlers at 160# I would not be surprised to see one of them drop down to the easier 152#. Both Pasiuk and Russell are clearly vulnerable to such a threat or even to upsets from the likes of Snode (Shenendoah) or Nolan (Beallsville).

Johnson dropped a narrow 5-3 decision to Hodous in the regional semi-finals and was eliminated from state consideration. This year he has made up for that misstep with some outstanding wrestling and an "A" Classic title. He'll head up easily the strongest and deepest district in the state at this weight. Basically, it falls into two parts. First, are the small school, traditional "A" competitors such as Johnson, Briseno, Roth and Keller (Liberty Center). Second, are competitors who would have been "AA" under the old set-up like Adkinson, Heinze, Rickard and Siefker (Ottawa-Glandorf). At this weight there is a good clear-cut distinction which will make it easy to see the impact of the addition of the smaller "AA" schools. In fact, throughout this entire "A" classification it will be interesting to do a post-mortem and see how well the traditional "A" schools do against their somewhat larger, new arrivals.

Soehrlen, a "AA" state qualifier last year, heads up a weak Northeast District contingent. He should easily place but it is likely that he will be the only one from his area to do so. Last year he drew defending state runner-up Jay Mendicino in the first round at state and was defeated. Then when Mendicino was injured and lost, Soehrlen was through for the year. Kemp, Born and Daugherty are possible place-winners, and as I've said so often in this report, the Richmond Hts. wrestlers seem to be showing substantial improvement. I've listed Quigley as a top contender for the last qualifying spot, but in reality all of the berths but Soehrlen's are really open. Other possibilities are Suvak (Newbury), a one-point loser to Quigley, Manley (Hillsdale) who has done well in the Southwestern portion of this district, and Hostetler (Apple Creek Waynedale) just down from 160#.

State qualifier Rapp won his first round match at Columbus last year and then was brutalized 17-2 and 17-1 on second period technical falls. That gave him a total of three losses on the year, which gives you an idea of the quality of competition he normally faces. That defect may cost him another appearance. Already Carver and Hummel have raced past him with Sowers (Covington) and Brenner (Cincinnati Reading) poised to do likewise.

The Central District is not particularly good here. Boehm looks to be the strongest, although Linder was a "AA" regional qualifier last year at 155#. Either one will be lucky to scrape by with a low place this year. Challengers from their own area are Wright and Haughn (North Union). I may have underrated this last wrestler.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JUDD SMITH (CUYAHOGA HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Laurendeau (Oak Harbor) | 12. Evans (Bloomdale Elmwood) |
| 3. Gibson (Cadiz) | 13. Bailey (Brookville) |
| 4. Sears (Bridgeport) | 14. Edwards (Bluffton) |
| 5. Feck (Blanchester) | 15. Gentile (Grandview Hts.) |
| 6. Robson (New London) | 16. Friedhoff (Wauseon) |
| 7. Kreiner (Archbold) | 17. Iddings (Covington) |
| 8. Ewald (Aurora) | 18. Karl (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 9. Ishmael (North Baltimore) | 19. Orlor (Jefferson Union) |
| 10. DeLong (Jonathan Alder) | 20. DeMarco (Brooklyn) |
| 11. Bendle (Bergholz Springfield) | 21. Kolmorgen (Cardinal) |

This is an exceptionally fine weight with outstanding competitors emerging from all portions of the state. It can be anticipated that this will probably be one of the more closely watched contests as it features a fascinating array of styles and backgrounds.

My choice is the two-time state runner-up from Cuyahoga Hts., Judd Smith. An exceptional takedown wrestler, Smith was a small 167#er last year and was worn down in the final by Burlenski. This year he'll be on the large end of the size spectrum and his fine moves will not be defeated by merely size and strength. However, if he is to garner that first state title, he'll have to be at his best because he'll face a succession of able wrestlers at the state meet. However, he is still, at least in my mind, a substantial favorite in this class.

About the only other possible placewinner out of the Northeast District is Ewald. A solid, experienced performer, he won't make a lot of mistakes and he'll take advantage of yours. On the other, he is not really a great natural athlete. After him there is a whole litany of possible choices for the last two spots. I selected DeMarco and Kolmorgen, but ranked them such that it would be impossible to mistake them for place winners. Other possibilities are Bramhall (Avon), Davis (Kirtland), Dudash (Columbiana) and Lance (Loudonville).

Laurendeau looked so exceptional in winning the Medina that I began to think of him as a potential champion here. Then I remembered Smith (who I haven't seen in awhile) and reaffirmed my original choice. However, this boy has a lot of nice moves and excellent balance and he will be difficult to beat. His district is filled with suitable place winning candidates. Robson and Kreiner, third last year in "A", battled in a highlight match at the "A" Classic which Robson won by two points. For that reason he is rated a place higher than Kreiner, but I can't escape the feeling that the next time could see that result reversed. Both are very good. Ishmael, the brother of the mammoth 185# from Oak Harbor several years ago, has begun to really add strength and he has catapulted himself into placement position. Remember, though, that Kreiner "decked" him in the regionals last year. Evans and Edwards look to battle for that fifth spot from this district, but there are at least three potential mischief makers right below them, Friedhoff, Karl and Kaczor (Milan Edison) all come from former "AA" schools and wrestle a more difficult schedule than some of those ranked above them. This could pay off at district time. Stacy (Ontario) is another potential qualifier.

The Eastern District is loaded. Gibson qualified for the States at 175# wrestling up because he couldn't break into the lineup anywhere else. Now he's at a more natural 160# and is undefeated. I was totally impressed with the sophomore Sears last year as he placed third at 145#. He has real placement potential with his only losses a narrow 2-1 defeat at the hands of Gibson and a 10-6 decision to "AA" qualifier Langdon. Both these boys are excellent. I would expect Bendle to drop to 152#, but if he doesn't, he'll give Gibson and Sears at least a little concern. Orler, too, is very good and he may consider 152# as an alternate route to Columbus. If not, he'll need to spring the big upset to see our state capital.

Feck was a regional semi-finalist at 167# in "AA" last year before checking out with two straight losses. Down several pounds and one school classification, he could be very formidable. Actually, he'll be something of an unknown quantity with few common opponents with the other qualifiers so that no firm forecast can really be made. Bailey and Iddings both have splendid records, but Bailey wrestles the stronger schedule. That will help. Kiehl (Versailles) and Allen (Jamestown Greenview) look to have little hope here.

The one weak area (and that's only relative) in the state at this weight is the Central District. DeLong and Gentile look to be on firm ground with respect to qualification with little competition in view. Green (Federal Hocking) has potential, but just not a tough enough schedule. Nobody to place from here.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD SINTOBIN (DELTA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Dumke (Columbia Station) | 12. Russell (Newbury) |
| 3. Brown (Kansas Lakota) | 13. Kieffer (Arcadia) |
| 4. Shumard (Jefferson Union) | 14. Edwards (Sidney Lehman) |
| 5. Drobnick (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 15. Fluty (Licking Hts.) |
| 6. Takacs (Orwell Grand Valley) | 16. Stewart (North Baltimore) |
| 7. Thomas (Columbus Academy) | 17. McCort (Beallsville) |
| 8. Leppelmeier (Edgerton) | 18. Fitzpatrick (Covington) |
| 9. Weber (Blanchester) | 19. Andrzejewski (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 10. Brammell (Grandview Hts.) | 20. McGill (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 11. Hasselbart (Oak Harbor) | 21. Fabry (Bellaire St. John) |

One would have to characterize this as a weight class without a leader. This is a reasonably strong field and contains a number of interesting wrestlers, but somehow, it lacks focus or direction. Had state champion Burlenski chosen to move down (as some had thought) then he would have been the target against which others here would have been measured. As it is now any of a number of possibilities could cash in on a state title.

At least once in every school classification I go with a real long-shot who seems to have good potential (in "AAA" Robbins serves as such an example). Here I've selected Todd Sintobin (not exactly a household name--yet) for that same role anticipating a series of close victories culminating in that school's first state championship in wrestling. A "AA" state qualifier last year, Sintobin heads a very strong and very crowded Northwestern field. All year they have taken turns knocking each other off so that the five qualifiers will not only need to wrestle well, but also get good pairings and be blessed with some good fortune. State qualifier Brown and Leppelmeier have looked good recently which shoves them toward the forefront of this picture. Hasselbart started strong, but has had some hard times lately--look for him to come back

strong at seasons' end. Kieffer, another state qualifier, has been injured and may need time to wrestle back into shape. He may not get it. Stewart is another important link in that rapidly improving North Baltimore team and he certainly has state skills. Andrzejewski, also, could easily qualify, as might McGill or Alvarado (Archbold). A long-shot opportunity is Cole (New London) who you might watch to spring at least one important upset. That's ten solid kids at this weight and half of them are doomed to disappointment.

The Northeastern District is equally good at the top, but lacks the depth after the first four contenders. Dumke has had a marvelous season and he could be a finalist. Drobnick has been just about as strong and his victory over "AAA" third-placer DelRosa not only was a significant achievement, but cost Nordonia the coveted team title as well. Takacs is at a small out-of-the-way school that is totally ignored by all but the smallest papers and wrestles a very weak schedule. Still he was a state qualifier last year and has wracked up some big scores on the few good people he has wrestled. He is really an unknown quantity who might not qualify for district competition or, on the other hand, might be in the state finals. Russell is a workmanlike competitor who doesn't seem to do much, but win. He would be the odd man out if Tabak (Richmond Hts.) or Steffen (Norwayne) get hot.

Shumard, a "AA" state qualifier heads a very strong capable Eastern District field. He should place and certainly could challenge for the top spot. McCort, a long-time state hopeful, should nail down that second spot although Fabry and Reed (Cadiz) could challenge. With a crowded Eastern District at both 160# and 189#, this weight class could catch some of that overflow.

The Columbus area boasts two state qualifiers, but I think they'll be overmatched outside their district. In fact, I think Thomas may be better than either of them which will force one of them to the sidelines a week earlier than last year. Thomas has come on very strong this year after a regular season undefeated record as a junior. He is placement material.

The Southwestern area is very weak with little to recommend it. The three qualifiers will all be relegated to the role of bracket fillers and not have to worry much about Friday wrestling. Weber seems like the best of the group, but I suspect that somewhere in the unknown part of that district there are folks better than Edwards and Fitzpatrick at this weight. We'll just have to wait and see if that supposition proves correct.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICK BURLENSKI (BRIDGEPORT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Reighard (Liberty Center) | 14. Younker (Gibsonburg) |
| 3. Edmondson (Newbury) | 15. Neer (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 4. Romey (Bergholz Springfield) | 16. Jacobs (Blanchester) |
| 5. Spieldenner (Fremont St. Joseph) | 17. Lechman (Chagrin Falls) |
| 6. Still (Jefferson Union) | 18. Grisez (Versailles) |
| 7. Heal (Seneca East) | 19. Syzmanski (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 8. Smith (Columbus Academy) | 20. Wyant (Smithville) |
| 9. Beachler (Loudonville) | 21. Ulrich (Grandview Hts.) |
| 10. Cameron (Brookville) | 22. Hillegas (Cadiz) |
| 11. Walters (Galion Northmor) | 23. Boes (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 12. Smolira (Union Local) | 24. Roth (Bellaire St. John) |
| 13. R. Sintobin (Delta) | 25. Miller (Batavia) |

This is an exceptionally interesting weight class that brings together a number of state place winners and will provoke intense district pressure in virtually every area. It is probably the strongest field ever assembled for an upper weight competition in "A". The competition is so fierce that I have ranked defending state champ Jeff Edmondson only third and last year's third place winner, Mark Younker, all the way down in the fourteenth spot.

After briefly flirting with ideas of moving down to 171#, defending state champ Rick Burlenski has decided to stay at 189# for tournament action. This is by far the tougher of the two classes and I suspect it is that challenge, at least in part, that motivates him. In addition, it serves a team purpose in that it subtracts from Liberty Center's point total since Reighard would be my choice were Burlenski absent. He will be a light 189#er, but he is so strong and physical his opponents, I'm sure, will barely notice. Second as a sophomore and first last year, Burlenski has been of the outstanding upper weight wrestlers produced in "A", and his victory will give Bridgeport three consecutive state titles at this weight.

This Eastern District will be brutal at this weight. State third placer Romey and "AA" state qualifier Still look to be the two next best here and will battle for the second qualifying spot. Both are currently undefeated. Smolira was a strong "AA" wrestler in this region last year and his only loss was to Burlenski. State alternates Roth and Hillegas have also returned (the latter is down from heavyweight), but they look to be in deep trouble qualifying. As is discussed in the next weight class, heavyweights in this area are not a fearsome breed and it is a possibility all four of the likely non-qualifiers may elect to compete at heavyweight. Otherwise, some of the best upper weight boys in "A" will not see Columbus because of the fantastic competition at this weight class.

Edmondson had a very strange state tournament last year at 175#. He pulled out two last-second come from behind thrillers in the first two rounds winning both 5-4. Then in the finals he wrestled old friend Matt Maclellan who had defeated him three times during the year, but Edmondson prevailed by a remarkably wide 12-5 margin. I don't think he can do it again. There is just too much power arrayed against him and the odds are far stronger that he'll lose before the final round rather than taking a second title. I chose him last year, and the temptation was strong to do so again, but it just goes too much against the facts. However, he proved to be a game battler last year, and I'm sure that this two-time state finalist won't give up his title easily. Beachler has come on strong of late and moved ahead of some competitors with better previous credentials. However, his hold on the second spot in this district is tenuous and he may be shaken from that lofty perch. Neer has won three tournaments already this year and has shown good improvement. Remember, though, that Beachler defeated him on a technical fall in the sectionals last year. Lechman is another of those solid Chagrin Falls wrestlers who has performed well all year finishing second to Edmondson at Brush, second at Richmond Hts. to Keenan and third at Kenston losing again to Edmondson. That kind of consistency in big tourneys augurs well for state competition. Looking at fifth best and missing qualification once again is Wyant who dropped a 3-1 go to state bout last year. He could turn that around.

Reighard (rhymes, believe it or not, with weird) has, in my eyes, shown tremendous improvement. A finalist at the very tough Medina Tourney, he then had three lightning-like pins capped off with a technical fall over Younker at the "A" Classic--the same Younker who had defeated him for third place in the state tournament just last March. He seems to be far stronger than a year ago and is my second choice to Burlenski.

Reighard faces "heavy duty" competition in his own district. State qualifier Spieldenner has been outstanding all year and could place. A new face, Steve Heal, has seemingly come out of nowhere and won both the Tiffin and Van Buren and handing Spieldenner his only loss. The question still to be answered is if he's for real. Sintobin has won some big bouts including a meet winning fall at heavyweight over state qualifier Harp, and he should qualify this year after dropping out in the quarter-finals last season. Younker, third last year, could be in qualification trouble with the number of strong competitors at this weight. People like Szymanski and Boes will pressure him round after round--something he is not used to confronting.

A trio of solid performers are looking for Central District qualification and one (Ulrich) looks like he may have to move to heavyweight. At any rate, Smith and Walters are both strong and certainly have placement potential. Walters wrestled a very poor Gorman tournament after a good early season start and may be at a crossroads in terms of further development. His results there may give Ulrich greater hope for qualification should he go 189#.

The Southwest District is again something of a mystery. Cameron was eliminated from his "AA" regional only by state qualifier Doss and has been again doing very well this year. Still, it's hard to match him with "A" 189's from other parts of the state so his ranking is something of a guess. Jacobs, another "AA" regional qualifier, is also strong including a win over state qualifier Parr. Grisez and Miller look to represent the traditional "A" powers in this part of the state going for the third qualifying berth. Grisez, if he gets hot, will challenge Cameron and Jacobs here. Another thought might be Smith (New Madison Tri-Village).

HVY

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN PULLINS (WEST JEFFERSON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Cornelius (Bloomdale Elmwood)
3. Harp (Liberty Center)
4. Schaffter (Apple Creek Waynedale)
5. Jackson (Black River)
6. Rodgers (Cincinnati Reading)
7. Carlin (Stryker)
8. Wintrow (Casstown Miami East)
9. Belshaw (Chagrin Falls)
10. Rospert (Norwalk St. Paul)
11. Massman (Cardinal)
12. Philipps (Sycamore Mohawk)
13. Bostick (Mechanicsburg)
14. Froelich (Columbus Academy)
15. McGough (Kansas Lakota)
16. Little (Stanton)
17. Murray (Norwayne)
18. Rowe (Olentangy)
19. Mays (Cadiz)
20. Chapman (North Baltimore)

The heavyweight division in "A" has generally been very weak with some unbelievable kids qualifying for states. That will not be true this year as there are a number of solid contenders from most areas of the state. I'm convinced that the list shown above will also be augmented when the Eastern District coaches plot their tournament strategy. Right now there are four or five 189's who could beat any heavyweight currently on the mat in that area. It will take but a moment's thought for several of the 189's who appeared blocked at that weight to move up to heavyweight--where they can easily qualify. More on that later.

An overwhelming choice at this weight is Dan Pullins, runner-up in "AA" last year, and an outstanding all-around athlete. While this weight class is often loaded with treacherous upsets and occasionally bizarre officiating, it shouldn't make much difference. Pullins is just a lot better than anybody else here. He is also tremendously better than anyone in his district. The next best two, Froelich and Rowe, tied in their dual meet, but neither would last a minute with Pullins.

The really interesting district is in the Northeast. Many of these boys have been battling it out for four years, and the ebb and flow in form has changed often. Right now "AA" state qualifier Cornelius looks to be best but it is not by any enormous margin. Directly behind him (well, at least most of the time) is "A" state qualifier Harp who has wrestled both superbly and miserably this year. Sometimes he looks so good he seems a threat to Pullins and at other times you wonder if he'll even qualify (he didn't last year). He handled placewinner Schaffter easily at Medina. Another state qualifier Rospert has looked good and should make it to Columbus again and, perhaps, place. Carlin upset Harp in the "A" Classic final and he has been on the fringes of real success for some time now. That elusive fifth spot will be a real donnybrook with Philipps, McGough and Chapman, the top possibilities. It'll be a marvelous district for those who like to watch the really big men go at it--and isn't that really almost everyone.

The Northeast District is also very strong. Schaffter was fourth last year and he is very big and strong. Jackson, though, is the real enigma. He should have been a "AA" qualifier last year, but was sidetracked a gummy substance on his hair and some questionable decision-making (not by the officials). He, like Harp, can be devastating when "on", but so far, has wrestled only one weekend this year. If he competes, keep your eye on him. Belshaw and Massman are good journeyman heavyweights (the kind that have been in short supply in the past in "A") with the ability to pull the big upset. Murray is a good outside choice while Pierce (Perry) is a real long-shot.

In the Southwest, the class may not be quite so deep, but Rodgers and Wintrow, certainly are two strong contenders. Both have "AA" regional experience and that should be enough in an area traditionally weak in "A" heavyweights. Bostick should be the third qualifier.

I listed Little and Mays from the Eastern District in my top twenty, but if the truth be told, that's only because someone has to qualify from there. As I discussed before, 189# has as many as six solid contenders and it's only a question of time before several move up to heavyweight. Two possibilities are Hillegas (Cadiz), who was there last year, and, perhaps, Roth (Bellaire St. John). Other "regular" heavyweights that might qualify are Threatt (Bergholz Springfield) and Hupp (Bridgeport). Stay tuned for further information.

TEAMS

1. CADIZ -- Any of five teams could conceivably win the team title, but the defending champs have to be the very narrow favorites. The opening quartet (W. Gibson, Heavilin, Bozicevic and Case) have all been state placewinners and should score an enormous number of points. The key may be how well Sabo and A. Gibson can do at the middleweights. They emerge from the same district as Bridgeport, so at common weights they'll be bracketed away from that rival.

2. LIBERTY CENTER -- A team that has disappointed at the state meet in the past (they were sixth last year), but they know this is their last chance. Kern, Dean and Reighard should all be finalists while Long should place. A key figure is the erratic Harp who must do well at heavyweight. If Keller qualifies, they could go for the top spot.
3. BRIDGEPORT -- Burlenski and the Burk brothers are all favorites at their weight class and that could be worth up to 80 points. The potentially awesome Sears should also score at the state level. The crucial elements may be Frohnapfel's adjustment at 112#, Lyle's ability to qualify at the very tough 119# class and LaMotte's return at 140#. Again, this team could win it all (they were second last year), and I can't help feeling that 119# may be the key for both them and Cadiz.
4. BISHOP READY -- A team that I may be under-rating here because their difficult schedule sometimes diminishes their true stature. Adam DiSabato is a sure champ at 130#, but they may not have any other finalists. Still, they could win it on team depth with Sarver, O'Reilly, Smales and DeShetler all contributing. The vital component may be the freshman Dom DiSabato and how well he can score.
5. RICHMOND HTS. -- A team that is probably still a year away, but they are moving up quickly. Adkins, Smith and Musarra are the top scorers, but those young middleweights like Crytzer, Campolieti and Daugherty are moving toward the forefront. They could only win it this year, though, if everybody peaks that weekend and the top four teams partially self-destruct.
6. WEST LIBERTY SALEM -- A team that has only four state caliber wrestlers, but two of whom are defending champs. Both Steve Dernlan and McDanial have lost several times this year, but expect to see them in the finals Saturday night. Matt Dernlan is one of the top freshman in the state and Hiltibran can score at Columbus this year. No margin for error here, because there are no back-ups.
7. OAK HARBOR -- They don't get started until 140#, but then things really begin to happen for them. Laurendeau is their kingpin, but Miller, Losie, Adkinson and Hasselbart could all qualify and score. They have particularly good chances at the weak 145# and 152# classes. If Losie can convert on his talent, they could challenge for the top five.
8. CARDINAL STRITCH -- Zapadka should win at 103# and Jaksetic may well be a finalist at 119#. After that they'll have to scramble at the middle weights for scoring.
9. DELTA -- A former "AA" squad that is just about at its peak as it moves down to "A". They have a lot of possibilities so if things go just right, they could move up as high as fifth. Both of the Sintobin brothers are excellent while Moore, Mattin and Badenhop all could score at the state level (if they can get there).

10. WEST JEFFERSON -- Heavyweight champions score a lot of points and Pullins should do that for this team. Manger and Butin are also good and it takes no great feat of imagination to see them both doing well at Columbus. There is little depth, however, with only Williams (at the weak district 112# class) and, maybe, Grossenbacher for back-ups.
11. CINCINNATI READING -- Burns is their superstar and he can score a lot of points by winning at 125#. Their three-man qualifying district should give them opportunities to qualify three or four other wrestlers. The big question is whether they'll be able to score at the state level.
12. LICKING HTS. -- A team totally dependent on middle weight wrestlers, but that is where "A" is weakest this year. Four returning qualifiers should be a real plus, but this quartet (except for Boehm) has not set the world on fire this year. A team with potential to move up.
13. KANSAS LAKOTA -- A classic dual meet squad that may not have quite the quality at the state level. Still they have so many chances with kids like Timmons, Elter, Lippert, Brown and McGough, that they should score at this level.
14. CUYAHOGA HTS. -- A team that basically relies on two outstanding wrestlers--Smith and Drobnick. Between them they could score a lot of points, and if people like Gracefo can help, they could move up.