

DIVISION I

103

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BO TOURIS (LAKOTA WEST)

Top Contenders

2	Mitcheff (Elyria)	16	Schilling (Mentor)
3	Genetin (Massillon Perry)	17	Guerra (Waite)
4	Weaver (Moeller)	18	Henry (Solon)
5	Radsky (Thomas Worthington)	19	Hartley (Pickerington North)
6	Ciccarello (Brush)	20	Li (Reynoldsburg)
7	Lang (Brecksville)	21	Farber (St. Xavier)
8	Crasto (Centerville)	22	Totodo (Kenston)
9	Neibert (Beavercreek)	23	Sutter (Clay)
10	Mattingly (Uniontown Lake)	24	Sherman (Milford)
11	Millar (Davidson)	25	Foore (Wadsworth)
12	Bowman (Whitmer)	26	Cruz (Lorain Southview)
13	Mead (Harrison)	27	Conn (Teays Valley)
14	Pretty (Elder)	28	Zupancic (Barberton)
15	Boosz (Glen Oak)	29	Scarberry (Marion Franklin)

Last year there was an influx of exceptional freshman 103-pounders throughout the entire state. Both Division I finalists, for example, were from that class with Tony Jameson the eventual winner. This year there is no evidence of such an invasion by the incoming freshman (with the exception of David Taylor in Division II) so the battle for this title will feature wrestlers with more substantial high school experience. In Division I four wrestlers stand out and would seem to have the best chance of gaining the title. First, and foremost, is the undefeated Bo Touris, champion at the SWOCA and Brecksville, and the favorite at this class. He has crushed Genetin and Weaver in individual match-ups and looks to be the strongest of this quartet. Forced to participate at 112# last year after losing to state runner-up Fields in the wrestle-off, this junior looks primed to win it all this year. He is, however, not unbeatable. At Brecksville, Sergeant took him into overtime before losing and Mitcheff lost 9-8 in the final round that same day.

Mitcheff seems to be improving at a faster rate than the others. He was 7th last year losing to Jameson in the quarterfinals. This year he was 4th at the Ironman and 2nd at Brecksville including the aforementioned loss to Touris. Genetin looked exceptional at the Ironman. He lost to the highly rated Novachkov by a single point and pinned Mitcheff for 3rd. He was a convincing champ at Medina pinning Neibert and Householder, but lost very badly to Touris in the Ohio Duals. A state alternate last year he has strong finalist potential. Weaver, now a senior, was 4th last year, but will need all his experience and guile to beat the top trio. He failed to place at the Ironman and lost in the SWOCA finals to Touris, 16-4. With Weaver and Touris both exiting the Fairfield

District there is a one in three chance of an unbalanced bracket sheet with Mitcheff, Genetin, and Weaver (should he lose to Touris) in the same half of the draw.

Genetin head a solid Mentor District, but there are five contenders for the last three qualifying spots. Boosz is a returning state qualifier at this class, but his results have me concerned. He was 7th at Brecksville, 3rd at the Dies, and 2nd (to Genetin's backup) at Northwest and may be on the bubble here. Mattingly, a smooth freshman, was 2nd at Medina to Genetin and 5th at North Canton – losing twice to Crasto. He looks like a qualifier. However, the one to watch is probably Ciccarello. He won handily at North Canton and after getting “stuck” by Mattingly in the first round at Medina, won seven bouts before having to default to 4th. He has looked good in recent duals. Henry was 2nd to Schilling at Solon and was 6th at the Midwest Classic. Schilling after winning at Solon had a couple of shaky tournaments (he was 0-2 at Brecksville) but was crushing people at the Mentor duals. Also in the mix will be the Kenston champ Totedo (Kenston) and Hillock (Massillon Jackson).

Mitcheff should dominate at Waite. This is not a strong weight class at this district so there is a lot of opportunity here for everyone. I like the freshman Lang next best. He won big at Riverside, beat Division III choice Sergeant for 3rd at Brecksville, and was runner-up at the Dies. He could get a low place at Columbus. Bowman, Guerra, and Sutter are the best out of Toledo with the first named winning two district bouts last year, and Sutter winning at Perrysburg, Northwood and Sylvania Southview. The powerful Cruz might be sixth best here, which if the bracketing is good, is a disappointing place to be. Watch for Zupancic and Foore, a freshman with a lot of long term potential.

Radsky was 8th last year and returns for another go around at 103#. He is the best in the Central District, but that is not exactly a ringing endorsement. He was 2nd at Marion Harding to Papesh losing by a surprisingly large 11-1 margin. Also back is state qualifier Millar who was recently 2nd at Perrysburg losing to Sutter in overtime. A semi-finalist at Brecksville he ended up 5th after getting tech falled by both Mitcheff and Lang. Still he finished ahead of Genetin at DeSales the first week of the season. Hartley might be third best but he had a tough weekend at the Mentor duals losing badly to Schilling, Henry and Mitcheff. After him everything gets a little misty a Li, Conn, or Scarberry possibly next best.

There will be some tough wrestling at Fairfield although some of the wrestlers mentioned will be channeled to the much easier Darby district. Touris and Weaver lead the way, but I worry about the latter after a 4th place finish at the CIT. State qualifier Mead also returns at this weight class but a return trip to Columbus is no longer assured. He was 3rd at Wadsworth (losing to Foore) and was 4th at Fairfield behind Crasto. Neibert is very good finishing 3rd at Brecksville (losing only to Genetin) 3rd at the SWOGA and winning at Beaver creek. Also excellent is Crasto who beat Mattingly twice at North Canton and lost only to Ciccarello, was also 3rd at GMVVA and won handily at Fairfield. Add into the mix Pretty, a consistent placer, Farber, Doll (Fairmont) and Herrington (Sycamore) and you have to hope a few of these will migrate to Darby.

112 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: COLLIN PALMER (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Fields (Lakota West)	15	Newbury (Milford)
3	Reese (Shaker Hts.)	16	Stoll (Coffman)
4	Peskar (Maple Hts.)	17	Shymske (Midpark)
5	McCoy (Elder)	18	Hinkle (Central Crossing)
6	Zamaria (Brecksville)	19	Latham (Sylvania Southview)
7	Farrell (St. Ignatius)	20	Steman (Teays Valley)
8	Horner (Massillon Perry)	21	Calabro (Springboro)
9	Dinda (Garfield Hts.)	22	Stephens (Piqua)
10	Radsky (Thomas Worthington)	23	Bivenour (Olentangy)
11	Fuller (Waite)	24	Briceno (Anthony Wayne)
12	Flores (Clay)	25	Wallander (Moeller)
13	Nein (Reynoldsburg)	26	Skilton (Mentor)
14	Lichtenberg (Strongsville)		

I failed to identify any fabulous freshman competing this year at 103#, but that is clearly not the case at this weight class. Collin Palmer may well go down as the most dominating freshman wrestler in Ohio history. This three-time junior high state champion has crushed every Ohio opponent pinning the vast majority of them. At Medina he had five falls, only one of which lasted into the third minute of action. He was champion at the Beast of the East in a dominating performance--and he does it all with a smile on his face. His only loss, an aberration in my mind, was in the finals at the Ironman, where, after majoring both the defending champ and the #1 ranked wrestler in the country, he seemed to panic after giving up an early big move. I don't foresee that happening again.

Palmer's only real threat is the excellent sophomore Ryan Fields. A state runner-up at 103# last year, he, like his workout partner Touris, is undefeated with titles at Brecksville and the SWOCA. Solid in every phase of the sport he'll want to get ahead of Palmer early and pressure him on top. Whether Fields can do this is problematical, but this former junior high state champion would seem to be the biggest barrier in Palmer's path.

Palmer exits a relatively weak district. Surprisingly there is not a single returning state qualifier at this weight, and no one with a history of major tournament victories. Three names, however, show up with some frequency. Flores, a transfer from Perrysburg, won at Sylvania Southview and Northwood after being a state alternate last year at 103#. He has not wrestled much outside the Toledo area, so it is difficult to judge him against a broader base of wrestlers. Zamaria won at Riverside in stylish fashion and was 4th at Brecksville--losing in the first round and then winning seven consolation bouts. He was a solid 2nd at the Dies and has good qualification chances. Lichtenberg is my mystery man. He always looks very solid to me, but his results are not what I

anticipate. A sectional champ last year, he was 2-2 at the district level. This year he has been 5th at Solon and Brecksville, and a runner-up at the Midwest Classic. Fuller had some big wins at Brecksville and won at Perrysburg over Sofoulis and could surpass at least one of the trio just discussed. I am looking for a breakout district from him. Other possibilities might be Gramza (Whitmer), Briceno, or Latham from Toledo or maybe Gyorfi (Lorain Southview).

The powerhouse district is at Mentor with a half-dozen state caliber wrestlers. The powerful Reese was 5th last year at Columbus with a number of big wins. He won at Solon despite some narrow escapes, but has missed some time with injuries. Dinda went 1-2 at Columbus last year, but had a bad tournament at Brecksville. I think that might have been an aberration. Peskar was a state alternate last year and has move ahead of Dinda. He won at Franklin Hts., Hudson and Kenston – the last mentioned with a big win over Bernard. He has state placement prospects. I also like Farrell and, possibly, Shymske who gives a solid performance each time out. The one to watch out for is the freshman Horner who was a semi-finalist at Medina and ended up 3rd and previously won at DeSales.

Maybe, it's me, but I do not see high placers emerging out of the Columbus area. I am thinking Alex Radsky might be the top contender for a state spot out of that area with 103# state qualifier Hinkle also in the running. Nein has had some good successes, but looked shaky at Brecksville losing on a 28 second fall to Roche and then 17-0 to Zamaria. Bivenour and Stoll are other possibilities and were 5th and 6th in the district at 103# last year. However, this is not a fertile area for 112-pounders. I kept thinking that, perhaps, a couple of the 119's might drop, but it did not happen.

As mentioned, Fields, I believe, will be Palmer's biggest obstacle on his path to a possible state title, and should dominate the Fairfield district. McCoy was a state qualifier at 103# last year and went 1-2 with a big win over Hinkle. This year he was 2nd to Fields at the SWOCA and gave him a good battle at Brecksville before losing 9-6 and not placing. However, he was only 5th at the CIT a somewhat disappointing result. Many of the top-flight contenders here have similar up-and-down records making final judgments difficult. Newberry, for example, beat a solid field at Wadsworth, but also failed to place at the SWOCA. Calabro is an experienced senior who has been placing at 119#, but certified at 112#. I like Stephens, 3rd at GMVWA, and the fast improving Wallander to provide solid competition at this weight class as well.

119 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TONY JAMESON (FITCH)

Top Contenders

2	Rini (Massillon Jackson)	16	Warner (Greenville)
3	Floyd (Solon)	17	Sanders (Westland)
4	Adams (Harrison)	18	Mercado (Lorain Southview)
5	Jones (Start)	19	Dare (Darby)
6	Palivoda (Marysville)	20	Peters (Lakota West)
7	Arnold (Garfield Hts.)	21	Eren (Perryburg)
8	Dukes (Princeton)	22	Krummert (Milford)
9	Birt (St. Edward)	23	Carmona (Waite)
10	McGuire (Miamisburg)	24	Reese (Amelia)
11	Byers (Holland Springfield)	25	Bradley (Sylvania Southview)
12	Graszl (Mansfield Madison)	26	Kretz (Twinsburg)
13	Highbaugh (Maple Hts.)	27	Rooney (Massillon Perry)
14	Nighman (Riverside)	28	Chaney (Westerville Central)
15	Lloyd (Olentangy)	29	Channel (Central Crossing)

This is a very strong weight class with at least a dozen state qualifiers likely to be competing for the overall championship. It will make for a very crowded bracket sheet at Columbus and that suggests that upsets will not be unexpected. The Mentor District will be absolutely brutal with the qualifiers there likely to be still recovering from that competition when they get to Columbus. Nonetheless, the brilliant sophomore Tony Jameson has to be the favorite based on his record the past two years. As a freshman he won the 103# title with four comfortable wins at Columbus including a 7-3 final over Fields. This year he has been even better culminating with a Brecksville title over a tremendously strong field that included four other state placers and two other state finalists. A well-deserved winner of the Outstanding Wrestler award he will have a target on his back for the rest of this field. However, he is so quick and smooth that he never presents a stationary reference point for his opponents. He made a careless mistake against Palivoda when well ahead putting him on his back for a few seconds. He cannot allow that few seconds lapse in focus in Columbus.

Also at that district is the powerful junior Dante Rini, 3rd last year at 103#. He gave Jameson fits last year defeating him twice – including the district semi-final. Since then they have not met as Rini has twice lost in the semi-finals (at State last year and Brecksville this year) one round before a potential Jameson match-up. Whether that history will impact the result of their next confrontation is still an open question. Rini is a short 119-pounder who is difficult to score against. He should be away from Jameson at Columbus. Ricky Floyd was 4th last year at this weight class losing a 1-0 semi-final thriller to the defensive-minded Sulzer. He wrestled the first two weeks of the season at Solon and the MWC with a balky knee and has not competed since then. Extremely quick and strong he is, at 100%, a formidable threat to anyone here. I would not be surprised to see him move up to 125# to again challenge Sulzer at what appears to be a far easier weight class. With Jameson, Rini, and Floyd at Mentor that leaves little

margin for error for the rest of the district. State qualifier Arnold is probably next best and the one plus is that this foursome all exit different sectionals setting up the best possible draw. Arnold had some bad luck at Columbus last year and has definite placement chances, if he can get there. I also like the powerful Highbaugh--one win from Columbus last year--and Medina runner-up Nighman. Both of these boys would be shoo-ins at any other district. Factor in Kretz and Cline (Uniontown Lake) and this district is exceptional. A dark horse is two-time state qualifier Scott Rooney who apparently will compete at this weight class. He will be the unknown variable at this district.

The top wrestler at Waite in the 119# class has to be Roshawn Jones. He was 7th last year at 112# with both state losses being two-point defeats. This year he had a first period fall to win at Sylvania Southview and a 20-3 technical fall to win at Northwood. Very athletic and strong he will be a formidable force at Columbus. Birt, who was 6th last year at 103#, and Byers, a state qualifier at 112#, are probably next best. Birt won their bout for 3rd place 6-2 at Medina and has wrestled a difficult schedule. Birt is still growing into the weight, but he is experienced and can put people on their back. Graszl is down from 125# and he has to factor into this contest. He won the always-competitive Gorman at this weight class and was 4th at the Top Gun in a weight class that featured two state champions. That is my top quartet with Mercado, Bradley and Carmona seem next best although Byers defeated the latter 20-6 at the Perrysburg final. Do not forget Eren. He has some erratic placements, but he did win the Midwest Classic over a host of solid competitors. He will need another weekend like that to qualify.

There are solid 119's in the Columbus area and factor in one or two more from the Xenia Sectional and it should be a spirited competition. Palivoda was the district champ at 112# last year and then grabbed a low place at States. He looked good at Brecksville making the semi-finals and scared the heck out of Jameson when he put him on his back during a 10-6 loss. He ended up 5th in the toughest weight class of a very strong tournament. Lloyd and Dare were both at Medina and both were pinned by Birt, but otherwise had good tournaments. Lloyd, in particular, had a tough first round draw losing 2-0 to eventual finalist Nighman. He then had some excellent wins and finished 5th. Sanders is very strong and should threaten all but Palivoda. Channel won at Franklin Hts. and was 5th at Wadsworth where he lost to the up-and-coming Chaney.

Adams is a standout at Fairfield. A district champion at 112# last year and a sixth place state finisher he is also a two time state qualifier. Oddly enough, and this has to be a rare occurrence, he met the same opponent (Travis Barnard) in the first round each time. After losing both he is probably happy that Geneva (and Barnard) are now in Division II. This year he was a solid winner at the SWOCA and won handily at Wadsworth. Duke, McGuire, and Warner are all returning state qualifiers at 112# who had a composite 1-6 record in Columbus. Dukes has missed some time this year, but McGuire has been one of spearheads of a very good Miamisburg team. He was 5th at GMVWA in a weight class that featured three state champs and was a solid 2nd at North Canton. One of this trio is likely to wind up at Darby. A second solid threesome,

perhaps just below this previous group, features Peters, Krummert, and Reese. There will not be many places left for Columbus, but any of this trio could qualify. Nguyen (Mason) and Campbell (Anderson) are other thoughts.

125

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KEITH SULZER (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Floyd (Solon) –(if at this class)	14	Ricard (Olentangy)
3	Gobin (Moeller)	15	Gooden (Waite)
4	Lybarger (Mt. Vernon)	16	Hotopp (Harrison)
5	Steele (Hamilton)	17	McDole (Tiffin Columbian)
6	Wall (Howland)	18	Millsaps (Green)
7	Hucle (Marysville)	19	Barth (Avon Lake)
8	Grzebyk (Elder)	20	Crine (Barberton)
9	Bryan (St. Ignatius)	21	Schreiner (Mentor)
10	Speelman (Mansfield Madison)	22	Dotson (Columbus West)
11	Potts (Kenston)	23	Beebe (Troy)
12	Holcomb (Pickerington Central)	24	Helber (Logan)
13	Dennis (Holland Springfield)	25	Noahr (Stow)

This weight class is becoming the exclusive domain of the Northeast District and, more specifically, St. Edward High School. The last seven champions and 10 of the past 11 have come from the Northeast while St. Ed's has placed at this weight six consecutive years with four different champions – Mark Jayne, Ryan Lang, Albert Madsen and Lance Palmer. This year could well be more of the same. State runner-up Keith Sulzer is a comfortable favorite in a weight class that is as presently constituted, rather weak. State fifth place winners Gobin and Steele are strong in the southwest while a handful of returning state qualifiers from around the state will also dot this bracket. However, Sulzer has defeated Gobin twice this year (majoring him the last time) and matches up well with others I see here. He still has a strongly defensive perspective, but this year has started to become more aggressive against all but two very best. He lost to Keyes in the dual and beat Jordan at the Ironman in close, low-scoring bouts that have been a hallmark of his career. Unless Floyd regains his health and competes here he should have few of those this time around.

I have a whole list of names at the Waite District, but none, except, Sulzer have previous state tournament experience. The name that seems to shine brightest is the fine sophomore Joshua Speelman. He won two district bouts last year and took the powerful Webb into overtime before losing. You could tell that he was going to be very good. This year he started at 130#, but moved to 125# winning the Gorman with ease and finishing 5th at a tough Top Gun weight class. Dennis and Gooden are the best out of Toledo and I note that in both bouts I have Dennis has been a narrow winner. Gooden was a semi-finalist at Brecksville while finishing 5th. Dennis was 3rd at Medina

including nice wins over Wentink and Kapper. For the record Sulzer beat him 13-0 in the semi-finals hence the gap between he and the others. Barth is also a solid possibility here, but I think McDole might be a shade better. He had a great junior year and could be a real factor. Wingard (Medina) and Crine (Barberton) might be other possibilities.

I believe this is the weakest weight class at Mentor (with the possible exception of 145#) and it looks like a fine haven for the large number of excellent 119's. I have already suggested Floyd might land here, but it must be a temptation for some others as well. Wall was a district champion in Division II last year beating Stone, Chapman, and Dean in the process. He has been at 125# most of the year, but certified at 119#. I think he will end up here. Second best would be the outstanding freshman Bryan who was 3rd at Solon, 2nd at Wadsworth and 4th at the CIT. He will be a big-time performer very soon. After that I have, well, I guess I have Schreiner, Millsaps and Potts in reverse order. That is a solid group but I think Kretz (Twinsburg), Jones (Parma), Cline (Lake) or even a Nighman or a Highbaugh might move in this direction.

There are some solid names in the Columbus area. Lybarger and Hucle were both state qualifiers last year going 1-2 at the Value City Arena. Hucle's first round win over district champ Kaake, 15-6, was particularly impressive. Both were solid at Brecksville. Lybarger, up at 130#, lost early to Vinnie Lopez then won eight consecutive bouts to finish a brilliant 3rd. Hucle went the other route at 125# making the semis and then ending up 6th after some sort of brouhaha. Lybarger was a solid 3rd at the Top Gun at 125# and he should place. Holcomb and Ricard are right behind them. The former has outperformed expectations this year winning at Pickerington and finishing 5th at the Midwest Classic. Two others to ponder are Dotson and Helber, but their chance could decrease with a large influx from Xenia.

Gobin and Steele both placed 5th last year (at 112# and 119# respectively). Gobin had big wins over Jones, Adams, and Lybarger (by fall) while Steele majored Hucle. This year Gobin was 7th at the Powerade, 2nd at the SWOCA and 3rd at the CIT beating Bryan in overtime. Only a sophomore he is still getting better. Steele was 3rd at the SWOCA and 2nd to Ben Jordan at the GMVWA. He has had injury problems recently but should be healthy soon. Grzebyk beat both these boys 7-5 to win the SWOCA, but has not been as sharp since then. He failed to place at Brecksville and was 5th at the CIT. I had state qualifier Dooley (Lakota West) penciled in at this weight class, but I have not seen his name anywhere, so he may be injured. Also here are Hotopp, Beebe, and Hensley each with qualification chances. Watch also for Oberschlake (Tecumseh) and Groh (Northmont).

130 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICHIE SPICEL (BRUNSWICK)

Top Contenders

2	Hardy (Solon)	16	Elliott (Mayfield)
3	Mizer (Massillon Perry)	17	Duff (Westerville North)
4	Gonsor (St. Edward)	18	Parra (Barberton)
5	Flake (Lakota West)	19	Guy (Miamisburg)
6	Webb (Sandusky)	20	Lawler (Columbus West)
7	Curley (Lakewood)	21	Lopez (Waite)
8	Erik Mayer (Sylvania Southview)	22	Kennedy (Marysville)
9	Meyer (Oakhills)	23	Wenger (Wadsworth)
10	Haas (Massillon Perry)	24	Wiggins (Maple Hts.)
11	Davis (Mt. Vernon)	25	Hollandsworth (Hamilton)
12	Ciccarello (Brush)	26	Vaughn (Fairfield)
13	Glaser (Moeller)	27	Gray (Celina)
14	Wolf (Northmont)	28	Roth (Whitmer)
15	Mancini (Twinsburg)		

For the past two years this has been one of the weakest weight classes in Division I and, in both years, we have had an unexpected and surprising state champion. Last year it was the freshman Richie Spicel who had failed to win either a sectional or district crown, but was victorious in a double overtime thriller in the final round at Columbus. It was a fairy tale ending for a wrestler who lost his sectional final 17-5 and failed to reach the district semi-finals. At the state meet he wrestled with remarkable poise winning four close, hard fought battles and confounding the supposed experts. This year we have a weight class with several highly credentialed wrestlers including a second state titlist each of whom has championship potential. But each with a substantial question mark next to his name.

In Spicel's case the question is can lightning strike for a second consecutive year. He began the year at 135# with a big win at Buckeye and an easy trip to the Medina finals – including a victory over former state champ Shawn Harris. However, Straughn overpowered him in the last round simplifying the dilemma as to the best weight class. Here, at 130#, he will face strong competition at both the district and state level. Defending state champion Kevin Hardy is up three weight classes and has tasted defeat more times already this year than all of last. He is still remarkably good in the top position and remains very tall even at this weight class. However, he is not turning people at this higher weight and remains somewhat vulnerable on his feet. He has not yet taken a tourney title this year, but as he grows into this class he should improve his results. Last year he allowed just two points in his eight district and state bouts (a Harris reversal). That is unlikely to happen again, but look for him to win a lot of low scoring bouts.

Also back is the runner-up at this weight class last year, Zach Mizer. He, too, started the season at 135#, but moved down shortly after the Ironman. He was 2nd at Medina, but lost badly in the finals apparently suffering an injury to his hand. He has not competed since then, but should be a significant factor at Columbus. The big unknown is Danny Gonsor, a backup last year, behind Sulzer and Palmer. After an exceptionally productive summer he claimed the 130# varsity spot and handled the eventual Medina champ Zach Burns in the opening dual meet. He then missed the next month with injuries returning as this report is being written. Rarely have I seen coaches as high as they are on this wrestler and that does not bode well for the competition. I am guessing that lightning will strike twice. That somehow, Spicel will navigate his way through a difficult bracket and win again. He has already beaten Mizer, and Gonsor has not yet reached peak form. That leaves state champion Hardy to beat. I think Spicel can beat him on his feet when he chooses neutral and that his coaches will teach him how to get out when Hardy chooses top.

The Mentor District is loaded. We have already talked about Hardy and Mizer, but there is more--much, much, more. There are four more wrestlers who have state credentials creating a logjam that will leave two deserving boys at home. Jordan Ciccarello suffered an injury at sectional that hampered him at last year's district. Even so he was a take down away from state qualification. He was 4th at North Canton – losing to Haas and Koballa – but missed Medina because of injury. Haas, now a junior returns at this class after being knocked out of last year's district by Richie Spicel. He was 3rd at North Canton beating Ciccarello 3-0 and then was 5th at Brecksville after losing a tough battle to Kriwinsky. Short and stocky he is difficult to score against. State qualifier Mencini made it to Columbus as a freshman, and went 0-2 at that level. This year he was 4th at Solon (losing to Hardy), 2nd at Hudson and Southview. He has avenged the defeat by Hardy in a dual and seems to be on an upward trajectory. State qualifier Elliott also returns and most recently was 3rd at 135# at the Top Gun. We have identified six very fine wrestlers and have not included Clopton who certified at 130#, but, I believe, is more likely to compete at the somewhat easier 135# class. In fact, Elliott may also choose to go that route as witness his latest effort at the Top Gun. If both move Wiggins might have hopes of qualification.

It was just as crowded at Waite. Again, Gonsor and Spicel have been looked at, but there are a half dozen other challengers. The Toledo sectionals will qualify some tough boys. State qualifier Webb is a load. Very powerful he should do better than his 0-2 record at the Schott last year--where he drew three time placer Hartley in the first round. Mayer qualified at 135# last year and upset district champ Bradberry in the first round before being eliminated. He won at Sylvania Southview and Perrysburg and should qualify. Curley may be better than either of the Toledo area boys, but Gonsor and Spicel will be a challenge. He was 8th at 125# last year, but it will be a push to do much better than that. Lopez and Roth are both good with the former upsetting Lybarger at Brecksville. Also a possibility is Nick Gray or Wenger. Again, I am guessing that some of this group may move to 135# in hopes of increasing their chances for qualification. Watch for the freshman Parra who is very good and getting better. Dave Mariola has built a fine squad at Barberton and it is still very young.

I do not see the same kind of logjam in the Columbus area. State qualifier Trever Davis and state alternate Paul Duff are both solid and have low placement potential. Davis, up a weight, was 2nd at the SWOCA and 4th at Brecksville after making the semi-finals. District finalist and state qualifier Kennedy returns at the same weight. He was 7th at Brecksville losing a tight 2-1 bout to Haas and another to Flake. He should be right there this year. Columbus West has some solid wrestlers with Franklin Hts. champion Tony Lawler one of the best. He was 2-2 at last year's district as a sophomore but should do better this year. That gives us four potential qualifiers with the Dayton area -- also rich in 130's --adding several more.

The Southwest has four returning state qualifiers and several other top contenders. Meyer was 7th last year, but his quarterfinal loss to eventual runner-up Mizer was a 13-12 decision that could have gone either way. He was 3rd at the SWOCA losing to Flake who he defeated at last year's districts and 2nd to Boyd at GMVWA. Flake has been very good. He was 2nd at the SWOCA and 4th at Brecksville losing to Lybarger each time. State qualifier Glaser is up two weight classes. He was 4th at the SWOCA losing to Flake and Meyer, but won the CIT. Factor in state qualifier Chris Wolf, state alternate Tucker Guy, Hollandsworth, and Vaughn and this is yet another crowded district.

135

PROJECTED CHAMPION: THOMAS STRAUGHN (MASSILLON PERRY)

Top Contenders

2	Lindsay (Moeller)	15	Johnson (Glen Oak)
3	Harris (St. Edward)	16	Messerall (Thomas Worthington)
4	Brownlee (Western Brown)	17	Braun (Colerain)
5	Dong (Westerville North)	18	Shadrach (Parma)
6	Stevens (Lakota West)	19	Hijoka (Sylvania Southview)
7	Clopton (Shaker Hts.)	20	Carmack (Miamisburg)
8	Hopkins (Marysville)	21	Gushard (Marion Harding)
9	Castillo (Waite)	22	Edwards (Mansfield Madison)
10	Rendinell (Kenston)	23	Willis (Boardman)
11	Vaccari (Davidson)	24	Jones (Westlake)
12	Smith (Solon)	25	Waters (Grove City)
13	Carraher (St. Xavier)	26	Cooperstein (Mason)
14	Cramer (Centerville)		

It is a rare treat to be present when a real breakthrough occurs – be it in, for example, business, or mathematics or in high school sports. I believe I was witness to one on the night of December 28th when Thomas Straughn realized how good he could be. We all knew that he was very good. He was 2nd (to Nemec) at Junior High States as an 8th grader and then finished 5th and 4th the last two years – losing several times to Nemec once again. Then this year he again dropped a close decision to Nemec at 145# when he apparently had an epiphany--that maybe, he should lose a few pounds like everyone

else. Never one to cut weight ala Alan Fried he decided, on reflection, to drop to 135#. The results were dramatic. In the semi-finals at Medina he pinned state runner-up Chris Andrews and then dismantled state champion Richie Spicel 21-6 in the finals. It got him the MIT title, the outstanding wrestler award, and if this is not some grand illusion, the inside track for the 135# state title. Last year, as a sophomore, he was a state semi-finalist at 140# losing to the eventual champ, Josh Horne, 9-6. This year just placing will not be enough – or next year he may be down to 119#.

It may not be easy, Lindsey, also a junior, has had a breakthrough season too. A state alternate last year he won the SWOCA in crushing style (closest bout was 20-8) and was 4th at the Ironman and 3rd at the Powerade. He beat both former champ Shaun Harris and Brecksville runner-up Jesse Stevens at the Ohio Duals in an excellent performance. He may have the horsepower to challenge Straughn.

Do not count out Harris just yet. A state champion as a freshman at 103# he lost to Hardy in the 112# title bout last year. In a bizarre episode, Harris down by a point took the down position in the third period against the strongest rider in the state. It seems to have been a case of playing into the opponent's strength while opting away from your own, and it cost him a second state title. It will certainly not be a decision that will be immortalized in the coaching hall of fame at St. Edward. This year, up four weight classes, Harris has had some early season struggles. He was 5th at Medina and 4th at the Beast and failed to place at the Ironman. Remember, that Harris has had some early season issues in the past and been brilliant at tourney time. He does, after all, know how to win.

Straughn leads the way at Mentor. The trio of state qualifiers Rendingell and Clopton along with state alternate Smith look next best. Rendingell won at North Canton and Kenston (beating Shadrach both times in the final). Clopton has been busy finishing 2nd (to Lipp) at Solon, 3rd at North Canton (losing in overtime to Shadrach), and 6th at the Powerade. Smith was 4th at the Midwest Classic and 8th at the Powerade. Also here is state qualifier Johnson, a Brecksville semi-finalist at 140#, before dropping to 6th. He beat out Smith for the final qualification spot last year. Add in Shadrach and Willis and it should be a solid competition. Certainly if Clopton opts for 130# or Elliott shoots up from 130#, it would have a major impact on the results.

It is much less crowded at Waite. The next best after Harris is state qualifier Castillo. While Harris has gone up four weight classes, he has remained at the same place. Last year he lost to Nemeck in the district finals and went 1-2 at Columbus. This year he has won at Perrysburg and was 6th at Brecksville losing twice to Brownlee. Beyond this duo the cupboard looks rather bare. Hijoka, who won three district bouts, and Gushard are in the mix with Edwards, 5th at the Top Gun and Jones (Westlake). Here is where we might see some of the 130's move up.

There are five high quality boys in Columbus with Dong at the top of my list. He was a district 3rd last year losing only to Depoy and then went 1-2 at States. I have him losing just once (to Andrews) this year and he marched through Wadsworth like Sherman

through Georgia. He has strong placement potential, as do any of the top three here. Hopkins was 5th at states beating Curley where Dong could not. This year he won at Marysville and was 8th at Brecksville including a loss to Castillo in the 30-second tiebreaker. Vaccari, also a state qualifier at 125#, went 1-2 at the Schott losing to Hopkins 2-0 in the consolation. He was 2nd to Mizer at DeSales and won at 140# at Perrysburg. He may be looking at that weight class as a tourney time option. Messerall was exceptional at Marion Harding crushing everyone until state runner-up Skoff majored him. Waters is back at 135# and could play a role here as might Hansel (Marion Harding).

Lindsey heads a strong Cincinnati area group that should place at least two at Columbus. Brownlee looked very good at Brecksville. In the semi-finals he gave Cubberly all he could handle exhibiting great strength and power. He was 4th at the SWOCA at the very tough 145-pound class and was 1st at Fairfield, and this junior is a goer. A Division II district champ last year, he is one to watch closely. State qualifier Carraher also returns and finished 3rd at the SWOCA losing big to Lindsey. He was 5th at 140# at Brecksville losing twice to the excellent Moore. This trio all had state success last year, but the sophomore Stevens, up three weight classes, is getting better very quickly. He was only 5th at the SWOCA losing to Carraher and Cloran, but had an excellent Brecksville Tourney finishing 2nd to Cubberly. In his run he pinned Hopkins and Davis and decisioned Brown. I think he is a player here. Add in Braun and Carmack and that is six solid wrestlers with Cooperstein a real possibility. Should be a very good district.

140

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LANCE PALMER (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Moore (Mount Vernon)	14	Lee (Maple Hts.)
3	Bodnar (Fitch)	15	Dettwiller (Springboro)
4	Weinkam (Moeller)	16	Andreas (Darby)
5	Kline (Westerville North)	17	Garcia (Sylvania Southview)
6	Janik (North Ridgeville)	18	Kappus (St. Ignatius)
7	Bohl (Lakota West)	19	Roth (Whitmer)
8	DeLiberato (Brush)	20	Tentler (Massillon Jackson)
9	Ruff (Beavercreek)	21	Hipp (Columbus West)
10	Rager (Wadsworth)	22	Gutierrez (Springfield South)
11	Newell (Kenston)	23	Brown (Gahanna Lincoln)
12	Vaughn (Fairfield)	24	Marrone (Parma)
13	Canini (Jerome)	25	Herrick (Waite)

The fourteen previous wrestlers who won state titles their first three years of wrestling have gone on to become four-time champs--and Lance Palmer will be an overwhelming choice to extend that streak this year. Palmer's path to four titles follows a remarkably

familiar template--wrestling at a very low weight as a freshman and sophomore and then moving up classes as a junior and senior. There is one difference, however, he will be only the third four-time champ in Ohio history all of whose titles were in Division I. Absolutely devastating on top he pinned every opponent at the sectional, district, and state tournament last year --all before the third period. In fact, you have to go back to a state quarterfinal bout in his sophomore year to find the last opponent he did not pin during the tourney process – Chris Hartley – who he never pinned in five meetings. His only loss the last two years was at the Ironman to Pennsylvania's Matt Dunn when he took down in the second period (what's with those Ed's coaches) and got turned. It will not happen again this year as Palmer should increase his pin streak at Columbus. I really believe that his power half will become the stuff of legends like Joe Heskett's cradle, Tommy Milkovich's fearsome fireman's carry, and Jimmy Mason's spiral ride.

With Palmer so dominant there are two schools of thought. Some wrestlers--with championship aspirations--look for other weight classes more conducive to their hopes. A second group sees an opportunity. Weight classes featuring three time champs are often less strong and deep, and provide placement probabilities. Underclassmen, particularly, may see a place on the awards podium as a stepping-stone for the following year. With Nemec at 145# we may not, however, see as much movement as might otherwise occur.

The Toledo Waite District is not deep after Palmer. The one exception is Janik who was 6th at this weight class last year representing St. Edward. He is very good winning at Avon Lake and Normandy and he certainly should know all about Palmer. They will be apart at the district level. Rager was at 145# last year and might still end up at 152# rather than here. He won two district bouts last year. He has been at several weight classes this year finishing 3rd at North Canton but failing to place at Wadsworth – both times at 152#. Garcia, Roth and Herrick will be the strongest representatives of the two wrestling sectionals at this district and two of them should qualify. Both Garcia (Sylvania Southview winner) and Roth (Tiffin champ) have solid district experience. Roth, a transfer from Toledo Central Catholic, knows how to win, while I see Garcia as more explosive.

There are a lot of possibilities at Mentor. I keep expecting great things from Bodnar and he is getting closer. Already a three-time state qualifier, he has not always had great bracketing luck. Two years ago he lost to eventual champion Mathews in overtime and fell one win short of placing. Last year, he lost his district final 2-1 to eventual runner-up Foore, and consequently drew in the first round, the very tough Dowell – losing 1-0. He ended up 6th losing again to Dowell. This year he was 2nd to Lipp at Brecksville and 2nd to Moore in overtime at the Top Gun. A good draw and a solid weekend could make him a finalist. I like the strong and punishing DeLiberato next best here after a 1st at Kent State, 2nd at North Canton and a DNP at Medina after Palmer pinned him in 60 seconds in the quarterfinal. Newell up from 125# won at Kenston and was 3rd at North Canton and seems next best. Hudson champ Lee needs to keep at weight but has the ability to reach Columbus at this class. The backups should one of the top quartet fail might be Tentler, Marrone, or Kappus.

The top two in Columbus are very good and, even better, are both sophomores. Kline was a state qualifier at 130# last year losing in overtime in the quarterfinals and then failing to place. If he has lost this year I have not seen it as he won the Midwest Classic, Pickerington, and Wadsworth. He is an exceptional talent with finalist possibilities. I think Moore might eventually be even better. He defeated Bodnar to win at the Top Gun and was 4th at Brecksville losing to Lipp in the semi-finals, and was 3rd at the SWOCA. He has wrestled a much more difficult schedule than Kline. I like Andreas next best with Hipp, state qualifier Canini, and Brown other possibilities. The Xenia Sectional will also play a key role here at this weight.

There are three returning state qualifiers at Fairfield--unless Ruff ends up at Darby again--and they all have placement potential. They are very close in performance. I am putting them basically in the order of their finish at the SWOCA. Weinkam defeated Ruff, and Bohl also did the same in overtime. Weinkam was 7th at the Ironman and this junior is out-performing expectations. The quartet of Vaughn, Dettwiller, Gutierrez and Massong (Oakhills) are role players with opportunities especially if several of this seven are sent to Darby.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SEAN NEMEC (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Foore (Wadsworth)	14	Tolbert (Shaker Hts.)
3	Haxton (Strongsville)	15	Johnston (Beavercreek)
4	Abdur-Rahmann (Princeton)	16	Mickley (Davidson)
5	DiYanni (Reynoldsburg)	17	Campbell (Solon)
6	Holley (Lakota West)	18	Thomas (Lakeside)
7	Hill (Grove City)	19	Brochetti (Parma)
8	Hilton (Moeller)	20	Harker (Westland)
9	Kusnier (Perrysburg)	21	Coleman (Massillion Perry)
10	Beech (Mentor)	22	Larter (Western Brown)
11	Place (Central Crossing)	23	Whitt (Groveport Madison)
12	Ewing (Miamisburg)	24	McNamara (North Olmsted)
13	Schafer (Ashland)	25	Saraniti (Stow)

Wrestlers meeting in the state finals in consecutive years, is relatively unusual (although with seeding the odds have improved), but this year three such possibilities exist in Division I alone. The most probable is here at 145# where Sean Nemec and Derek Foore look to renew their rivalry. Last year Nemec got any early lead and built on it to record a 12-2 decision. My guess is should they meet again Nemec will again prevail, though by a much closer margin.

Nemec, only a junior, finished 2nd at 130# two years ago after being upset by Mathews in the final round. Last year he was brilliant winning at the Medina and the Beast before

defeating Foore for the title. This year he again prevailed at Medina and won also at the Ironman--defeating his archrival Blasco in the finals. They have rested him to some extent because of knee issues, but he should be close to 100% at tourney time. He is on the path to becoming one of the great middleweights in Ohio history.

Foore, also a junior, has won at North Canton and Wadsworth but has not faced the rugged competition that Nemec has met. He has wrestled a few bouts at 152#, but my guess is that he will end up competing at 145#. The biggest difference between the two is Nemec's dominance on his feet and I am not convinced that Foore has yet closed that gap.

The Waite District has some great up-top strength. Nemec and Foore are both here as is state 3rd place winner Mike Haxton. The last named was exceptional at tournament time despite having seven losses in the regular season--he lost only to Schlatter and Gigliotti during the tourney process--the latter bout a 6-5 heartbreaker in the semi-finals. He has been at 152# much of the year and it did not seem to agree with him. He could be in the top three again this year. Kusnier was the winner of the Outstanding Wrestler Award at Perrysburg defeating Tank in a real barnburner. He will face tough competition from the top trio, but with good bracketing could qualify. It worries me that he failed to place at Brecksville losing to Wilson and DeYanni. But he was 2nd at the Midwest losing only to Beech. Schafer and Wharton (Clay) are also possibilities, but McNamara, 4th at Medina, could play a role as well.

There is very little at Mentor. State alternate Beech was 2nd (at 152#) at Solon and won the Midwest Classis for a great early start. However, he failed to place at Brecksville and then came back to battle Haxton in the dual before losing 7-6. That one bad weekend might well have been an anomaly. Tolbert was also a runner-up at Solon and he knows his way around a wrestling mat. Brochetti is another possibility, but Thomas cannot be overlooked. He defeated Brochetti 6-1 earlier in the year. Campbell, Coleman and Saraniti need to be considered as well. Coleman was impressive at Medina and may need to be rated higher.

The Darby District has some solid kids with good placement potential. The four that come immediately to mind are DiYanni, Hill, Place, and Mickley, and they are a solid step ahead of everyone else. The real question is how should they be ordered. Hill was the most successful last year winning a bout at States--but he lost to Place, 4-0 at the district level. This year he was 2nd at Marion Harding to Nicola, and beat St. Edward's third stringer 11-4. Not important you say. Well, Elliott (the sub) beat Foore at the Ohio Duals. Place, also a state qualifier, was 5th at Wadsworth losing to Foore (7-2) and Schafer. Mickley was 8th at Brecksville while DiYanni was 6th with the latter the more impressive of the two. Reynoldsburg seems to have ramped up their schedule and it shows--they have a nice squad particularly in the middle and upperweights. I think all four could qualify dependent somewhat on what teams arrive from Xenia. Look for DiYanni and Hill to be at the top at Darby with Whitt and Harker challenging the other two. Particularly keep an eye on Harker who had a great first day at district last year.

While Hilton is the only returning state qualifier at Fairfield, he is not at the top of my list at this district. The best of this group is Abdur-Rahman the 145# champ at the SWOCA. Last year he cruised into the district semi-finals and then lost a tough one-point bout to the excellent Mizener and failed to qualify. This year he has stayed at the same class, but gotten much stronger. He beat Holley in the finals 12-8 and looked very solid. Holley also lost to Abdur-Rahman at last year's district, but pinned Hilton at the SWOCA. At Brecksville he lost early to DiYanni, 2-1, but won some narrow bouts to finish 4th. Moeller's very difficult December schedule has been tough on Hilton who failed to place at the Ironman and Beast and was 4th at the SWOCA. Ewing was a sectional champ but was only 1-2 at the district level. He was 3rd at North Canton losing to Foore but beating DiYanni, but was only 5th at the GMVWA. That is my top quartet with Johnston, Larter (beaten 9-8 by Holley), the erratic Ferguson (Milford) and Blake (Springboro) in the mix.

152

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOHN PYCRAFT (ELYRIA)

Top Contenders

2 Weisenstein (Ashland)	14 Thomas (Mayfield)
3 Mahon (Moeller)	15 Abitua (Whitmer)
4 Holztrager (Normandy)	16 Horn (Maple Hts.)
5 Kassil (Westlake)	17 Sjostrom (Thomas Worthington)
6 Shalash (Reynoldsburg)	18 Newton (Waite)
7 Quick (Mt. Vernon)	19 Phillips (Massillon Perry)
8 Bertin/McLaughlin (St. Edward)	20 Rees (Miamisburg)
9 Geist (Beavercreek)	21 Hiller (Greenville)
10 Donadee (Firch)	22 Walker (Madison)
11 Bivenour (Olentangy)	23 Williams (Pickerington North)
12 Gariety (Centerville)	24 DeJaco (Elder)
13 Rivera (Princeton)	25 Noll (Westerville North)

The 152# weight class is thin throughout the state in all three-school classifications with the exception of the two brilliant competitors in Division II. A couple of the 160's I thought might drop--Bradberry and Popham have stayed put while Haxton looks committed to 145#. This is, therefore, a class where a hot weekend could propel any of a dozen wrestlers to a state finals appearance.

The Waite District is by far the strongest. Weisenstein was a state quarter-finalist and has been outstanding this year. His only loss was to the exceptional Sponseller by an 8-4 margin – the closest bout this year for the West Holmes star. Pycraft started slowly missing Avon Lake and failing to place at the Ironman. He was outstanding at Brecksville beating Haxton and Kusar the last day. He also defeated Holztrager, by a point, in their dual meet. Kassil was a state semi-finalist at this weight class before being tech falled by Ciraky, eventually falling to 6th. District champ and state place

winner McLaughlin has had injury issues at St. Edward, but his back-up, Kyle Bertin, may be difficult to dislodge. He beat Mahon in overtime at the Ohio Duals. Abitua has been very good in the Northwest District, but sectional champ Joey Newton has eight losses already. Do not count him out, he could still be a factor here. I think the champion could well be from this district, but the question is which one? Lets go with Pycraft.

State qualifier Holztrager clearly stands out at Mentor. He was at 160# last year and won three bouts finishing 7th. He was 2nd at Avon Lake to state champion Friery and 2nd at the Midwest Classics to Terry. His only other loss was in the dual to Pycraft, the three losses have been by a total of four points. He should win this district and get a good state draw. Donadee has missed the entire year so I am not sure what to expect. He was a district 3rd last year at 140#, but lost twice at States. The Fitch team knows how to win so he could be a major factor. Horn, Thomas, Phillips, and Walker are other possibilities, but it really is wide open.

Shalash placed 8th at Columbus last year and heads the Darby District. He won three super-tight bouts last year just to qualify, but this junior is starting to score more. He will need to do so as this will be the second best district at this weight class. Shalash was 3rd at Brecksville losing to Kusar, but winning six other bouts including an overtime win over Haxton. He did not meet Pycraft but comparison wise he lost to Kusar by four while Pycraft beat the same opponent by seven--he defeated Haxton in overtime while Pycraft won by three. I think there could be style issues here. Quick has been a steady placer, but at the lower end (6th Brecksville and 4th Top Gun) in big meets. Bivenour and Sjoström have done much the same with Williams and Noll two boys with upset potential.

I would not be at all surprised if Mahon won it all. I watched him at the Ironman go toe-to-toe with Josh Rohler – tied 2-2 in the 3rd period – until Rohler levered him over to win. Mahon was 7th last year at this class most significantly narrowly beating Shalash twice. This year he won at the SWOCA and was 5th at Powerade, but was upset at the CIT and finished 3rd. He also lost in overtime to Bert in the Ohio Duals. Still, only a junior he needs just a little more consistency. It is a crowded field after him. State alternate Gariety has missed some time with injuries and state qualifier Geist was injured at the GMVWA. They will both be back with Rivera, Rees, Hiller, and DeJaco all looking for a qualify spot. I think Geist and Rivera might have the inside track, but watch out for a healthy Gariety.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ANTHONY CIRAKY (WESTERVILLE SOUTH)

Top Contenders

2	Popham (Mount Vernon)	15	Vallos (Boardman)
3	Bradberry (Lakota West)	16	Campbell (Harrison)
4	Gaier (Moeller)	17	O'Connell (Milford)
5	Milavec (Elyria)	18	Findley (Lorain Southview)
6	Heinz (Riverside)	19	Motley (Shaker Hts.)
7	Becka (Normandy)	20	Gerenscer (Pickerington North)
8	Swift/Tomasone (St. Edward)	21	Cummings (Lakota East)
9	Cartledge (Maple Hts.)	22	Humphries (Westerville Central)
10	Green (Westlake)	23	Berdysz (Garfield Hts.)
11	Hess (Ashland)	24	Sturwold (Troy)
12	McKinley (Davidson)	25	Newburg (Northmont)
13	Donaldson (Bowling Green)	26	Snell (Cincinnati Northwestern)
14	Pawkiewicz (Fitch)		

Roy Thomas is a ballplayer that today almost no one remembers. Even in his own time – a century ago – he received little recognition and was forced each year to battle for his centerfield job. All he did was get on base all the time (he led the league in walks eight times), steal bases, score runs, and play brilliant defense. Modern statistical analysis suggests that he was one of the ten most productive players during the first decade of the last century, and yet, there is absolutely no chance that his name will ever be seen in Cooperstown. He was undervalued throughout his career and for the next ninety years as well. I feel that I too, have been guilty of undervaluing an exceptional performer. During the last two and half years Anthony Ciraky has a record of 112-3 wrestling at 140# or more since his sophomore season and has finished 2nd (to the now legendary Dustin Schlatter) and 1st at the last two state meets. He has outperformed my forecasts the last two years and that suggests that I, and, perhaps, many others have somehow overlooked (or undervalued) his results.

While he will be the favorite at this weight class based on his brilliant record, victory is not yet assured. Travis Popham returns (I believe) to challenge him once more. Last year Popham was 44-4, losing both the district final to Ciraky, 5-3, and the state final, 4-1. These were solid but by no means overwhelming wins that could not be reversed this year. I talked to Travis (and his mother) at Brecksville and they suggested that 152# was too great a cut so he would be at 160#. So, of course, he wrestled at 171# at the Top Gun just to give me something to consider. At any rate he was 2nd at Brecksville losing to Bradberry in the finals, and then was 3rd at the higher weight losing rather badly to Foster – but then so did Kilgore. He would seem to be a little short for the more crowded 171# class, but I suppose it might be an option. Still, I expect to see him looking for just that one crucial win over Ciraky on Saturday night. I do not see much else in the Columbus area. McKinley was the 4th seed at Brecksville, but only

went 2-2, while the #3 seed Humphries at Wadsworth ended up at 7th. Both these boys came close to state qualification so I think they will do much better in February.

There are some real good 160's at Fairfield. Both Gaier and Bradberry were district champs last year with Gaier finishing 4th at 145#. This year Gaier won at SWOCA (convincingly over Bradberry) and was 4th at the Powerade. His 2nd place finish at the CIT was surprising since his loss to McMullen was unexpected. Bradberry's big tournament was at Brecksville where he beat Popham 7-5 to win the title. He is up four weight classes but it is not impacting him as witness his overtime loss recently to Ciraky. There is a huge drop-off after this duo--about the same distance Ciraky and Popham outdistance their Columbus competition. Campbell, Cummings, and O'Connell (2nd at Wadsworth) all have state qualification possibilities, but not much in terms of placement. I think Sturwold and Newburg are also players here with Snell the dark horse.

The group at Waite will probably max out with a couple of middle to low places. There are two returning state qualifiers here, but I think Milavec might be best here. Last year at 152# he lost a tough district quarterfinal bout 6-5 but was marching easily through the consolation bracket (including a 11-2 win over Cartledge). In his go-to-state bout, comfortably ahead, he was called for an illegal slam (very questionable) and his opponent could not continue costing him the bout. I still say that the proper technique for an official in that case should be to go to the scoring table and seal a piece of paper that says either legal or illegal move. That way the incentives even out. A little small at 160# Milavec was 3rd at Avon Lake, but has not competed recently. St. Edward has used three 160's all of whom are strong. State placer (as a freshman) Tomasone has had three difficult three years much of which relates to a back injury. He was very rusty at Medina where he failed to place. Swift, just down from 171#, has looked very good giving Gaier a good bout at the Ohio Duals. State qualifier Green and Hess were 0-4 at Columbus, but again have been excellent this year. Green won both tournaments entered but Westlake does wrestle the toughest of schedules. Hess was 2nd at the WIT, but failed to place at Wadsworth. Donaldson was one win from state qualification last year and won big at Rogers earlier in the year. Findley, 2nd at Carlisle and Southview, gave Green all he could handle in the latter tournament and cannot be counted out. That is six wrestlers for four spots with a strong sectional split. Four of them exit the Southview Sectional while the other two will be at the Toledo Sectionals--hopefully the same one. If so, the pairings should be fine.

There are no returning state qualifiers at Mentor, but there are some rugged performers. State alternate Heinz won at Riverside and was 2nd at Medina (to Iowa State recruit Reader from Michigan). Right behind him are Becka and Cartledge both of whom have had solid success this year. Becka was 3rd at Avon Lake (losing to Milavec) and the Midwest Classic and 1st at Normandy, while Cartledge won at Franklin Hts. and Hudson. The latter is a powerful, very physical wrestler who won twice at the Ohio Duals and lost 14-9 to Gaier. Pankiewicz was 3rd at Brecksville and 4th at the Top Gun. He is one of those wrestlers who thrives in the consolation rounds. Vallos and Berdysz are both

good the former winning impressively at Kenston. Motley is returning from injuries, but has the talent to create upsets.

171

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DUSTIN KILGORE (BEREA)

Top Contenders

2	Roddy (St. Edward)	15	DeLong (Stebbins)
3	Cameron (Moeller)	16	Masterson (St. Ignatius)
4	Miller (St. Xavier)	17	Saks (Kenston)
5	Marrero (Reynoldsburg)	18	Muhammad (Shaker Hts.)
6	LaFollette (Marysville)	19	Brown (Pickerington North)
7	Santos (Hamilton)	20	Forte (Milford)
8	Pushpak (Brecksville)	21	Trusnik (Nordonia)
9	Samson (Whitmer)	22	Roman (Glen Oak)
10	Jones (Wadsworth)	23	Moore (Sandusky)
11	DeLande (Davidson)	24	Mosca (Darby)
12	Weiler (Ashland)	25	Brown (Bedford)
13	Flynn (Eastlake North)	26	Waller (Amherst Steele)
14	Cogar (Barberton)	27	Carr (Fairmont)

This is a weight class that could well be one of the most interesting and entertaining in Division I. It features wrestlers with contrasting styles and varying levels of experience and results. I have identified six performers who will be major factors in the final resolution – two from the north, two from the south, and two directly in between.

The two from the north are both underclassmen with extraordinary potential. Dustin Kilgore, now a junior, was 3rd at 160# last year losing only at the district level to three-time champion Mike Miller and at the state level to runner-up Bryan Koz. This year he has dominated at this weight class crushing every opponent on his way to a perfect record. Oops, not quite a perfect record as Foster caught and pinned him early at the Top Gun. Until then he had not had a close bout, at least partly because he has not wrestled a demanding schedule like a Cameron or Marrero. Nevertheless, he must be prepared at the state level for what will surely be some more demanding tests. The sophomore Roddy was 6th last year at this weight class losing in the semi-finals to the powerful Clemens. It was an exceptional result for a freshman, though not unexpected from this two-time junior high state champion. This year he was 2nd at the Ironman and then missed three weeks before returning for the Ohio Duals. He lost to Cameron at the Ironman (after defeating him twice last year), but then turned the tables with a pin in an otherwise close bout in the dual. He has both outstanding technique and power for a still youthful wrestler.

The two from the south have high place (or championship) potential. Cameron, 8th last year, has matured into a solid senior wrestler with considerable upside potential. He was one of only three wrestlers to win both the Ironman and Powerade and has tacked

on a SWOCA title as well. His only loss was the aforementioned fall to Roddy, but I was more impressed with his big win over that same wrestler, 12-9, in the Ironman finals. Miller, also a senior, was 7th last year defeating Cameron 10-5 after having twice lost to him earlier in the year. He has campaigned at 189# much of the season winning the SWOCA title, but missing the Brecksville because of injuries. At the CIT he again fell a point short of Cameron that is starting to become something of a habit.

The seniors LaFollette and Marrero are the duo I have highlighted from the Central District. LaFollette was a district runner-up at 160# last year and then finished 8th at the state meet. He had the misfortune of drawing Kilgore in the first round, but lost a relatively close 5-2 bout. This year he was 1st at Marysville and Pickerington, but only 3rd at Brecksville. Marrero has been a puzzle. I was impressed with his runner-up finish last year at Brecksville, but surprised when he lost in overtime and failed to qualify for States. This year I anticipated some very strong placements, but it has yet to happen. He was shut out at North Canton and was 6th at Brecksville (after reaching the semis) and losing bouts by scores like 17-13 and 11-9. I have not given up on him and he will be a dangerous opponent for anyone – as witness his win at St. Xavier.

This does not exhaust the list of potential contenders. State qualifier Santos is very good and will be a thorny obstacle at both the district and state level. He was a state quarter-finalist at 189# last year, and was 2nd to Cameron at the SWOCA. Pushpak defeated both Marrero and Lafollette on his way to the Brecksville title and deserves special attention.

Kilgore should dominate at Mentor. I just do not see anyone here who can give any real trouble. The other three qualifiers are likely to have a tough time in Columbus based on results so far this year. I think Flynn, Masterson, and Saks might have the best chances to qualify with Roman and Brown certainly in the mix. Muhammed is another possibility, but has not wrestled of late.

Roddy faces far stiffer competition at Waite. State heavyweight placer Tim Samson is apparently wrestling at 171# in a move you do not often see. He has been fighting injuries (not surprising after battling those mammoth heavyweights all last year), but after watching him you can never count him out. Pushpak, as mentioned won the Brecksville title along with Riverside and was 2nd at the Dies. He has really become a factor at this weight class. I am not sure about the sophomore Dru Jones. He failed to place at North Canton and was 5th at Wadsworth, but was perfect at the Ohio Duals with three first period falls. That is a good quartet but a second foursome of Cogar, Hassan Moore, Weiler and Trusnik are also strong. They will make this a very tough bracket sheet. Cogar, for example, beat Roman by six at the Dies and lost to Pushpak 2-1. This second group will pounce if Samson is not 100% or Jones has an off weekend. A wrestler to watch in the future is the freshman Nelisse (Elyria). He is going to be very good.

Two other names I have in Columbus are Delande and Brown. The first named won two district bouts last year, but injuries shut him down at Mentor. Brown also had two

district wins and has had success this year at the same weight class. This duo is well below LaFollette and Marrero. Mosca is another possibility, but expect the Xenia Sectional to get some qualifiers here.

Cameron, Miller and Santos are rock solid at Fairfield. They could all place at the state level. DeLong is very strong and has a consolation round upset over Santos as proof. Forte and Carr are also contenders, but I may see some good people. I kind of looked for state qualifier Angelo Mauro (Centerville) at this class, but injuries apparently will prevent him from competing. He would be a real factor either here or at 160#.

189 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ERIQUE ROBERTSON (MAPLE HTS.)

Top Contenders

2	Honeycutt (St. Edward)	15	Schoen (Toledo St. John)
3	Hettlinger (Darby)	16	Alexander (Findlay)
4	Dattilo (Centerville)	17	Hayes (Mayfield)
5	Iammarino (Brush)	18	Weatherholt (Lakota West)
6	Keefer (Reynoldsburg)	19	Canfield (Lakota East)
7	Porter (Mason)	20	Beatty (Central Crossing)
8	Legg (Westerville Central)	21	Schilling (Massillon Perry)
9	Naylor (Western Brown)	22	Cardenas (Bowling Green)
10	Andrews (Collinwood)	23	Evans (Brookhaven)
11	Waggy (Wooster)	24	Varner (Uniontown Lake)
12	Sokolow (Avon Lakes)	25	Goblirsch (Toledo St. Francis)
13	Porco (Massillon Jackson)	26	Rooney (Anderson)
14	Nickolai (Piqua)		

I keep thinking that this class might be one of those interesting weights dominated by just two wrestlers--but there are some factors that may complicate such a straightforward analysis. Those complications include injury recovery time, weight class selection, and dark horse candidates. Let us take a closer look at that top duo.

Erique Robertson, still only a junior, is a gifted athlete with solid fundamentals instilled by a coach who knows how to win. A district champion last year he made it to the state semi-finals before losing to the eventual champion, Tim Miller, 8-3, and ending up 4th. I am not sure that he has had anything resembling a close bout this year, and his 12-4 win over the excellent Bill Schindel highlighted his credentials. He has won at Franklin Hts., Hudson, and Kenston and ended every match early at the Ohio Duals. I believe it will take a superior effort for six full minutes to have any chance of beating him.

Chris Honeycutt was a regular at the St. Edward camps as a middle schooler, but moved to Massachusetts before entering high school. As a sophomore he captured the Massachusetts state title before returning to Ohio when his father was transferred back to Cleveland. He is still a bit of a project, but the talent is there. He was 5th at the

Ironman (losing 8-7 and 14-13 bouts) and 1st at Medina earning a dramatic 10-8 overtime win over the redoubtable John Weakley. This was a victory that was gained primarily by applying seven minutes of constant pressure to an outstanding opponent and converting opportunities into points. It would have been great to have had a match up with Robertson at the Ohio Duals, but they, unfortunately, never met. Like Robertson, none of his bouts went the full six minutes.

The big unknown is the status of Phil Hettlinger. A district runner-up he was outstanding at the Schott winning three bouts before succumbing to two-time champ, Mike Ward, in the finals. He has been injured all year and has not yet competed. There are conflicting stories as to his eventual availability, but should he be able to wrestle he would transform this competition into a three-cornered affair.

Robertson will face some tough people at his own sectional and district. Last year, as a 10th grader at this weight class, Iammarino captured a district third and qualified for the state meet. He met Hettlinger in the first round losing 3-1 and then won three consolation bouts to finish 7th. This year he has not been as dominant as I anticipated. He won at Kent State but was 3rd at North Canton losing to Fisher in one round and then tech falling him the next time. He was 4th at 215# at Medina, but has looked good in recent duals. Andrews is amazing. This senior has more strength and athleticism than just about anyone here--his collegiate upside is amazing. State qualifier Waggy knows how to win. He was a district champion last year and went 1-2 at Columbus. This year he has been a consistent placer with a 2nd at the WIT and a 3rd at Medina – losing only to Weakley. Porco, 3rd at Brecksville beating Naylor, Molder and Keefer, could easily qualify. He has come a long way this year. Add in Schilling, Varner, and maybe Kutti Fitch) and it is a very good district. A wrestler to watch is the freshman Cody Hayes. He may not get to state this year, but if not, it will be the last time he misses.

Honeycutt should not face such a crowded field. State alternate Sokolow has moved up a weight class and has had solid success. He was 3rd at Avon Lake and won at Southview. Tom Schoen has come out of nowhere to dominate in the Toledo area. Most recently he was 2nd at the CIT losing an 8-7 decision to the powerful Srock. I wonder if he is related to Chuck – a fine TSJ wrestler in the mid 1970's. Alexander, a former junior high state runner-up, won at Marion Harding and has had a great dual meet season. He certainly has placement possibilities at the district level. Also from the west Cardenas and Goblirsch have done fine work meeting, for example, in the finals at Rogers.

If Hettlinger is healthy he is easily the best in the Central District. Otherwise, the top spot is really wide open. Keefer qualified last year at 215# and is probably the best 189# currently wrestling in that area. He was 4th at Brecksville and won at St. Xavier. State alternate Legg is also at this class and won at Wadsworth defeating Beatty 10-5, in the final. Beatty was also 2nd at Franklin Hts. after being tech falled by Robertson. Evans was a smashing winner at the Wolfpack Classic and could play a role along with Schuh. The other possibility here is Dutton (Pickerington North).

The Southwest District is deep. Dattilo was a state qualifier at Columbus last year at 171# (10-2), but has really stepped up this year. He was 1st at North Canton and 2nd (to Division III choice Logan Brown) at the GMVWA. Porter was the district champ at this weight class going 1-2 at Columbus after getting an unlucky draw. He was 3rd at the SWOCA losing to Naylor, but I see that as an anomaly. Naylor has moved to Division I with Western Brown and was 2nd at the SWOCA including a win over Porter. Up from 160# he lost a 2-1 quarterfinal bout at Brecksville to Porco and failed to place. That is my top trio, but Massie, Canfield, Weatherholt, and Rooney have all had their movements this year. Each has a very good tournament, but I have not seen consistency. One of this group is almost sure to qualify and it could be even two or three. The sophomore Quehl (Moeller) was 3rd at the CIT and could be a factor. He was a junior high state runner-up losing to Roddy two years ago.

215

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JUSTIN POWELL (BOARDMAN)

Top Contenders

2	Jabbie (Westerville South)	14	Hogan/Sitkowski (Chardon)
3	Jameson (Elder)	15	Balogh (Valley Forge)
4	Gantz (Howland)	16	Barker (North Ridgeville)
5	Crowley (Wadsworth)	17	Hale (Mentor)
6	Watson (Sandusky)	18	Morton (Mason)
7	Stolarsky (Solon)	19	Newcombe (Marion Franklin)
8	Rasho (Uniontown Lake)	20	Emmons (Milford)
9	Mernedakis (Pickerington Central)	21	Simmons (Coffman)
10	Robinson (Maple Hts.)	22	Fletcher (Greenville)
11	Campeau (Fairmont)	23	Beach (Scott)
12	McGriffin (Bowling Green)	24	Brogan (Westland)
13	Perez (Fremont Ross)	25	Little (Springboro)

This was an exceptionally strong weight class last year featuring some excellent big men. The most amazing aspect, however, was that the top four finishers--Marcellino, Roman, Palmieri, and Simon--all had Nicholas (or Nick) as their given name. Never before have we had a result even remotely similar to this one. Now, Nick has recently regained popularity and has become a relatively common name (top ten for males under 20), but still occurs, even in that group, less than 1% of the time. Assuming that people named Nick are no tougher than those with other names like Lance or Dustin or even Brian (how could they be) then the probability of last year's finish is $(0.01)^4$ to the fourth power or about one in one hundred million. It is safe to say that with 42 weight classes per year we are not likely to see such a result in our lifetime or in many thousands of lifetimes.

In some ways weight classes remind me of commodity markets. Occasionally, after reaching a peak level they crash to far lower levels before rebuilding once again. That happened last year at heavyweight after the superstar group of heavies--Fox, Johnson, Hoppel, Nail, Davia, etc.--graduated two years ago. This year we have seen a real drop off in depth at 215# and it is arguably the weakest weight class in Division I.

I think it is a two-man battle between wrestlers who met in the first round of the state tournament last year. In one corner will be the senior, Manju Jabbie, and in the other the rapidly improving junior, Justin Powell. Jabbie was a district champ last year and went to States with a 41-1 record. He beat Powell 11-6 that first round, was a semi-finalist and eventually fell to 6th. I have him undefeated this year and pretty much unchallenged winning at Marion Harding and the Midwest Classic. Powell has suddenly become a whirlwind this year. At the Top Gun he blasted Nachtrab, 9-3, on his way to winning the title. It was the same story at Kenston when he pinned Cortez Robinson. The son of heavyweight runner-up Kevin Powell and nephew of Fitch coach Brett Powell, he has good "big man" genes.

Powell faces a far tougher district. Gantz was the state runner-up at this weight class in Division II last year and is solid. Powell defeated him in their dual. Sitkowski was a district runner-up and state qualifier at 171 pounds, but I have not seen scores for him yet this year. However, he has certified at 215 lbs. That may be because the excellent Hogan has won that position. Hogan had a district 6th last year—one win from qualification. Rasho is an excellent sophomore who cannot help but impress you. He was 3rd at Medina and North Canton and is getting tougher all the time. Stolarsky, Robinson and Balogh are all state caliber wrestlers, some of whom are bound to be disappointed. Stolarsky has been at 275 much of the year so he'll be a big 215 pounder (is there a small one?) while Robinson won at Hudson before getting pinned by Powell at the

It is not nearly so ridiculous a competition at Waite. The top two qualification candidates were both state alternates last year and now have one last chance to make it to Columbus. Crowley was second at North Canton and 1st at Wadsworth, defeating Watson 5-4 in the finals. I thought both might qualify last year, but this time they both should be district finalists. McGriffin won at Sylvania Southview and Rogers, pinning both Perez and Beach in the two finals. He was not on any of my lists at season's onset but he has thrived at 215. Perez looks fourth best here, but Barker could challenge. Perez did defeat him 12-5 in district consolation action last year. Beach is a possibility.

There are clearly three standouts headed for Darby from the Columbus area. Jabbie has already been discussed but Mernedakis and Newcombe are both very good, finishing 5th and 6th at this district last year. Both lost very tough go-to-state bouts and like Watson and Crowley, are down to one last chance. Mernedakis has had good results this year, but I haven't seen much on Newcombe. He was not good at Wadsworth being pounded by Crowley, but his track record shows him to be better than that. Rick Simmons is the fourth best and should have reasonable chances for

qualification. Sato and Brogan might be other possibilities, but this is a very solid group of 215's.

There were twelve underclassmen who made it to the district level from the Southwest district--eleven at Farfield and one at Darby. That makes for a lot of returnees and some solid competition. Jameson is the best of this group. He finished 8th at Columbus after having the bad luck of drawing Palmieri in the first round. He has won at the SWOCA and the CIT and was 2nd at Brecksville to Nachtrab. State alternate Campeau looks next best with a first at Fairmont and a third at GMVWA, losing to Moore. After that, it is by guess and by golly. Morton, Emmons, Fletcher and Little come to mind, but there is not a lot to differentiate them. This is one of those situations where favorable bracketing and a personal-best performance will decide who gets the last two qualifying spots.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAVID WADE (BEAVERCREEK)

Top Contenders

2	Barlow (Westerville Central)	15	Dies (Green)
3	Hartshorn (Reynoldsburg)	16	Oswalt (Mt. Vernon)
4	Wagner (Centerville)	17	Holland (Holland Springfield)
5	Jeremiah (Darby)	18	Kmiecek (Normandy)
6	Becker (Moeller)	19	Collins (Maple Hts.)
7	Nicholson (Marion Franklin)	20	Naro (Amherst Steele)
8	Lipsey (Sycamore)	21	Neria (Stebbins)
9	Terifaj (Strongsville)	22	Yoder (Massillon)
10	Piccirillo (Mayfield)	23	Guillion (Fairborn)
11	McBride (Scott)	24	Crum (Westerville South)
12	Gudmundson (Fairfield)	25	Cramb (Boardman)
13	Dobransky (Brecksville)	26	Humphreys (Medina)
14	Zucker (Fremont Ross)	27	Pritchard (Northmont)
		28	Cox (Glen Este)

In the early 1700's, a French statistician named Abraham DeMoivre (the mathematically inclined may recall DeMoivre's Theorem; $(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)^n = \cos(n \theta) + i \sin(n \theta)$) made his living by calculating odds for local gamblers. Statistics was in its infancy then and so he was able to support himself for many years in that manner. But, DeMoivre was, in truth, a determinist who believed everything could be predicted. During the last months of his life, he noticed that he spent ever more time asleep. He calculated from these observations that he would be asleep for 24 hours (in other words dead) on November 27, 1754 -- and, indeed, that is the day he died.

I hope I am never that good at forecasting (faithful readers know that I have nothing to fear), but it would probably take another DeMoivre to untangle the combatants in this weight class. There are, however, three conclusions that seem clear-cut. First, Columbus is the home of heavyweights this year with four or five solid contenders, while

Cincinnati is nearly as strong. Second, no heavyweight from the North (Mentor or Waite District) is likely to get anything more than a very, very low place. Third, a healthy Ben Kuhar, out with a torn ACL, would otherwise be a prohibitive favorite.

Let's look at those two strong and deep districts. The Central District has always seemed to have good heavyweight wrestlers so its mildly surprising that they haven't had a champion in this century--the last winner, Troy Bowers in 1999. This year, they have five or six good candidates with Darby likely being augmented by other top contenders from the Xenia Sectional. It will be a terrific district. Barlow was a Division II district champ last year and finished 6th in the state. This year he won at Liberty and Wadsworth, nipping Nicholson in the finals. A mobile 250 pounder, he can score points with solid offensive moves. The junior Hartshorn had a bad district last year, but I was impressed with him at North Canton and Brecksville. In the former, he was third, losing to state champion Cameron Wade in the semifinals and he was second at the latter losing again to Cameron Wade in the finals. A very big junior, he will be a major threat to Kuhar next year. State alternate Jeremiah--he lost his go-to-state bout 9-8--was very good at Medina, finishing second to David Wade, 2-1, in a rather lackluster final. Nicholson was a state qualifier last year, losing to Kuhar in the first round and ending up 1-2. I think Hartshorn and Jeremiah may have moved by him. Oswalt and Crum are both good but the Xenia Sectional is bound to send some excellent boys, really narrowing the margin of error.

The Cincinnati-Dayton area has at least eight strong candidates--with only one or two likely to migrate to that hornet's nest at Darby. David Wade was machine-like at Medina, dispatching foes with real precision until the last round bout with Jeremiah. He beat both Becker and Oswalt to win the SWOCA. The other Dayton area star is defending district champion Lance Wagner. He was 8th last year after losing to Kuhar in the quarterfinals. He was second at Fairfield and North Canton, but won at the GMVWA. Very athletic, he is a scorer who can make things happen. Three other Dayton heavyweights--the very small Guillon, Neria and Pritchard--are all possibilities, but this will, both at Darby and Fairfield, be very crowded fields.

There are two pre-eminent heavyweights in the Cincinnati area. Becker has shown great improvement after a district runner-up finish last year. He went 1-2 at Columbus, losing to Wagner for the second weekend in a row. This year, he was 2nd at the Ironman, SWOCA and CIT, a nice run of finalist appearances, but its time to win a few. He was undefeated at the Ohio Duals. State qualifier Lipsey was 4th at the SWOCA, but 1st at Fairfield where he beat Wagner 11-10 in the heavyweight bout of the year to this point. It got him the OW award as well. Gudmundson and Cox are two other reliable performers.

As promised, there isn't much at Waite. State qualifier Terifaj heads the assemblage and has had a solid season. He was second at Solon to Cameron Wade, but fell to 5th at Brecksville losing to Hartshorn and Hiles. His big win was at the Midwest Classic. I like some of the Toledo area heavyweights to qualify. McBride has won several tournaments and has improved substantially from last year. Holland (of Holland

Springfield) is also good and won at Perrysburg in convincing fashion, but failed to place at Medina. The gigantic Zucker is coming on strong (and I mean strong) and could well be a major factor here. The wild card is 270-pound Dobransky who was a startling 5th at the Powerade and a solid 3rd at Riverside. He failed to place at Brecksville so its still too early for final judgements. Naro, who beat McBride last year, Humphreys and Ernst(Whitmer) are other thoughts.

Piccirillo won at the Top Gun, defeating Oswalt (probably the 5th best Columbus heavyweight) in the finals. He also won the Kenston on a rideout over Gudmundson and is the best at Mentor. I'm seeing very little after him. No Division I wrestler from this district was in the top five at North Canton, Medina, Brecksville or Wadsworth. That is not good news. Dies, 4th at the Dies, and Kmiecek, champion at Avon Lake and Normandy, are probably next best with Collins and Yoder waiting in the wings. I'm guessing two heavies not mentioned in this report make it to Columbus from this district.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward

This will be a signature year for St. Edward. They will tie the record of the 1978-1987 teams by winning their tenth consecutive team title and twenty-second since 1978. Also, dare I say legendary coach Greg Urbas will have won his eleventh team title, tying him with Howard Ferguson for the most championships. They scored 209.5 points last year, eclipsing the previous record held by Walsh Jesuit (1995) by 6.5 points, and becoming the second team to break the 200 point barrier. They may do so again this year. It is conceivable that they could win six individual titles even without their heavyweight Ben Kuhar (torn ACL). They have an opportunity to go down as one of the great teams and now must seize that chance.
2. Moeller

I don't think that this team has yet peaked and performed on all cylinders. They could have as many as nine placers and will need that depth to hold off Lakota West for the runner-up trophy they won twice previously (2000-2001). The strength of the team is the middleweights from 135 to 171, but the bookends Becker (who has been great) and Weaver (who has struggled) can really help.
3. Lakota West

This team seemed to get better really quick--and that can most often be attributed to good coaching. They get off to a fabulous start with Touris and Fields both finalist material. The middleweights--Flake, Stevens, Bohl and Holley--need to do well, and Bradberry has to continue to be super. If Moeller falters, this team could score 100 points and take away the runner-up trophy.
4. Massillon Perry

The top three teams have outstanding depth for state level wrestling that no one else can match. At this point, everyone else has three, or at most four boys who can successfully compete in Columbus. Perry, the state runner-up, the last two years has three potential finalists in Straughn, Genetin and Mizer. Horner may be able to help or two-time qualifier Rooney, but it looks like the top trio will score virtually all their points.
5. Marysville

Popham should be in the top three while the sophomore Moore is very good. Lybarger and Davis need to do some scoring and hope that Quick can help. Oswalt could qualify out of the northern districts, but it is likely to be left behind here.

6. Elyria Pycraft and Mitcheff are possible finalists who can score a lot of points. They need Milavec to step up big time and hope that Goins becomes available and can score at 135. There is no margin for error here.
7. Westerville South Ciracky and Jabbie could both be champs and score some bonus points. That is worth 50 points generally puts you in the top five or six. I haven't heard about Legg recently, but he could be a real helper if available.
8. Fitch Jameson and Bodnar are a great tandem and a healthy Donadee could really help. I'm not sure where more points are going to come from unless Coach Powell can have his nephew transfer in.
9. Reynoldsburg This is a very fine team and it is time to see whether they can wrestle with the big boys. Starting at 145, they can throw at you--DiYanni, Shalash, Marrero, Keefer and Hartshorn. If they are ready to set personal-best marks, they could be a top-five team.
10. Maple Heights They have the one incandescent superstar in Robertson, but need to find additional scoring punch. Peskar could help, but Highbaugh is in a murderous weight class and I'm unsure about Lee, Horn, Collins and Wiggins. That means Robinson and Cartledge have to step it up at 215 and 160.