

### Division III

Only four state champions return in Division III, far fewer than normal, but they are augmented by nine runners-up. Also shown below are the district breakouts in 2006 for those that draw from different regions of the state.

		<u>Expected Qualifiers</u>	<u>Actual Qualifiers</u>
<u>At Fairmont</u>	Southwest	42	45
	Northwest	14	11
<u>At Steubenville</u>	Central	28	33
	Eastern	28	23

### 103 #

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: LOGAN STIEBER (MONROEVILLE)**

#### Top Contenders

2	Householder (West Jefferson)	15	Toney (Mechanicsburg)
3	Hayes (Chanel)	16	Traver (Genoa)
4	Reynolds (Pleasant)	17	Hook (Nelsonville-York)
5	Strine (Hillsdale)	18	Rohn (Ayersville)
6	Tinch (Mt. Gilead)	19	Hamilton (Waynedale)
7	Hall (Tuslaw)	20	Faykus (Bellaire)
8	Libengood (Troy Christian)	21	Bloom (Mohawk)
9	Lee (Elmwood)	22	Goldberg (Miami East)
10	Aranjo (Delta)	23	Ferguson (Montpelier)
11	Border (Caldwell)	24	Frederickson (Dixie)
12	Panno (Blanchester)	25	Descenna (Warren JFK)
13	Yeary (Reading)	26	Eichert (Arcadia)
14	Duhigg (VASJ)	27	Mershman (Delphos St. John)

Very often at 103# the forecaster is faced with a substantial dilemma since there are a lot of new faces with minimal track records. That will not be the case this year. The freshman Logan Stieber is at least as good as advertised and should have little trouble subduing the field at this weight class. A cadet national champ at Fargo, he is immensely strong and exceptionally talented. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Ironman to Taylor and has won everything else. At Brecksville he blitzed the field, winning all five bouts by fall or technical fall. In the semis he wrestled the top Central District 103-pounder senior, Kent Li, and had a first period fall over an excellent competitor.

The Owens District really has only three State berths with Stieber already making motel reservations in Columbus. Well, three will be more than enough since this is neither a strong nor deep group of wrestlers. There are no returning state qualifiers and very few

with district credentials. There are, perhaps, four wrestlers who stand out slightly from the rest. Lee won at Arcadia and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Van Buren (to Stieber) to go along with a boatload of dual meet wins. Traver was 4<sup>th</sup> at Sylvania Southview and won a district bout last year – on such thin threads forecasts are made. Aranjó was 8<sup>th</sup> at the GMVWA, but did not place at Perrysburg. Ferguson won at Richmond Hts. including a fall in the finals. Don't overlook Rohn who has won at Stryker, Lincolnview and Woodmore, Bloom who placed at the Gorman, and Eichert who has been a very active place-winner. Rohn, by the way is very good, and has a chance to be the first female state qualifier in Ohio history.

There is not a lot of depth at Maple Heights. Chanel, however, always seems to have an excellent 103-pounder and it is true once again this year. Dakota Hayes has wrestled a big-time schedule and done very well. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon losing 2-0 to Bolger in the finals, 7<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville and 5<sup>th</sup> at the CIT losing a close bout to Farber in the semi-finals. Just as importantly, he went 3-0 at the Ohio Duals including a 4-0 shutout of Reynolds. Next best is Strine who was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the WIT and Chippewa losing both times to Strasbaugh. Justin Hall won three bouts at Medina then sparkled at the Dies finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> ahead of some solid wrestlers. The fourth berth is not as easy to decipher. Duhigg has District experience, but I when I went to see him at Richmond Hts. he didn't make weight. Hamilton and Descenna are also possibilities.

In the normal course of events, Householder could anticipate being a heavy favorite at this weight--after all he was 4<sup>th</sup> last year and is one of only two boys competing at this class with state experience. He'll need to draw away from Stieber to contend for a finalist spot and the best way to do that is to repeat as district champion. That improves his odds from 50% to 67%. His only losses at Columbus last year were to Harrington and Hall – he has trouble with H's – both, ironically, who have brothers at this class. He was 5<sup>th</sup> at Medina and 4<sup>th</sup> at the Top Gun showing that he can compete at any level. The other returning state qualifier, Zack Tinch, is also at this district and should qualify again. However, I think Reynolds has surpassed him. The opening act in that dynamite Pleasant line-up, Reynolds won at DeSales and was a quarter-finalist at Brecksville. He also won at North Union and was 2-1 at the Ohio Duals losing only to Hayes. That's three solid choices. Border, the best along the river, is the obvious and most logical choice for that fourth berth. He was 6<sup>th</sup> at the OVAC and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Barnesville. We can't overlook Hook who was 6<sup>th</sup> at GMVWA and has over 20 wins. It may come down to bracketing whether Border or Hook qualify. Faykus and Pierce (North Union) are other possibilities in what is easily the toughest district.

It will be a whole new line-up at Fairmont with no returning district qualifiers. The first name I heard was Libengood on the powerful Troy Christian team. His Brecksville performance however was so underwhelming that I wondered whether some of the Cincinnati boys had surpassed him. However, he went 9-8 with Riki Reynolds so, maybe, he is better than he showed up here. After all, he wrestles a very demanding schedule, gets good coaching, and is surrounded by brilliant lightweights. Yearly and Panno have split two bouts with Panno winning the second and by a bigger margin. They were 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at Valley View with Panno winning 8-4. They appear to be the

dominant 103's in the Cincy area. Toney was 7<sup>th</sup> at Western Brown, but lost to Yeary, 6-0, but has pinned Traver. Mershman seems to be the best out of the Northwest sectional that comes here, while Frederickson won at Valley View and was 4<sup>th</sup> at Richmond Heights. Goldberg won at Clyde and has been a steady performer throughout the year. Jacobs (Oakwood) might be a possible guess as well.

### 112 #

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: TROY OPFER (SANDUSKY ST. MARY)**

##### Top Contenders

2	Sergent (Troy Christian)	15	Ziegler (Mechanicsburg)
3	Pope (Pleasant)	16	Wooten (West Liberty Salem)
4	Dennis (Lutheran West)	17	Dandurand (Hopewell Loudon)
5	Marmaros (Beachwood)	18	Hochwalt (Oakwood)
6	Poling (North Union)	19	Longmire (Purcell)
7	Harbart (Garrettsville Garfield)	20	Pizzuto (Jackson Milton)
8	Jones (Licking Hts.)	21	Begg (Bluffton)
9	Lopez (Patrick Henry)	22	Butcher (Collins Western Reserve)
10	Brown (Shenandoah)	23	Yoder (Martins Ferry)
11	Thomas (Bloom Carroll)	24	Kovach (Chanel)
12	Varner (Tinora)	25	Westhoven (Liberty Center)
13	Rayfield (Delta)	26	Porter (Bellaire)
14	Knapp (Waterloo)	27	Wentz (Fairland)
		28	Lute (Indian Valley)

Despite protestations from the central part of the state, I think this is strictly a two-man shootout between Opfer and Sergent. Opfer was 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> the past two years. His two state losses coming once in overtime, the other, last year, by a single point. This year St. Mary has wrestled a strange early season schedule, but Opfer has been pretty much untouchable. For example, against a solid D-1, 112-pounder Cody Schilling, he cranked out a workmanlike 4-0 decision wrestling a solid and precise bout. He is very good on top, and that may be a key advantage he holds over Sergent. The Opfer family has eight state titles and I think Troy ups it to nine this year.

Sergent is very good with the Junior Nationals at Fargo this past summer. He seems just a shade small for this weight class, but that probably isn't a crucial factor. What I've noticed is that he seems a lot more conservative recently against top-flight competition. He shows excellent defense, but I don't see that sweet little carry anymore. Sergent has been 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> the last two years in Columbus, with all three of his losses to St. Mary wrestlers, including twice to Opfer when both were freshmen. Last year he was brilliant the first three rounds of States, but then wrestled a strange strategic bout with Harrington and losing 5-0. This year he did not place at the Ironman and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in that brutal 112-pound class at Brecksville, beating D-1 champ Mitcheff and Papesch, and losing 3-2 to Touris. It would not be an upset if he wins it all.

We may well know more when they wrestle the weekend of the 27<sup>th</sup>, by which time, hopefully, this report will be virtually done. Remember, as seedable wrestlers they will likely be apart in the brackets at Columbus.

The Heath District, especially at the lower weight classes, is very strong. Pope was 5<sup>th</sup> two years ago, but did not place last year at 103# -- it was a year that saw him limited to about 15 bouts because of injuries. He was the champion at DeSales, but was absent at Brecksville. Then at the Ohio Duals he caught Sergent early and hung on to win, 6-5. It was a memorable victory, but not, in my mind, a defining one. I think Sergent will win their next meeting. Pope then lost at North Union to Poling, 14-7, but, apparently had knee issues that may have impacted the score. Poling has been undervalued in the past and was one win from state qualification at this weight class last year. Still, he, too, was upset at Alder by Thomas (after beating him at districts), so this district is topsy-turvy at the moment. Jones was 8<sup>th</sup> as a freshman at 103# and is adjusting to a higher weight class. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Licking Hts., losing to the excellent Weisman 1-0. Thomas, obviously, is also good and all four qualifiers could come from the Columbus area – but I don't think so. Brown was a runner-up at the OVAC beating the West Virginia state champ in the process. He also won at Coshocton, was 2<sup>nd</sup> to the terrific Garbrandt at Barnesville, and 3<sup>rd</sup> at St. Clairsville. Yoder is also a possibility with Lute, Porter, or Wentz in the mix. This will be a terrific district. Watch out for the young Neer, who is starting to rev it up after a tough Ohio Duals.

Maple Heights will also be a strong district, but does not have the depth we saw at Heath. Marmaros is a real fooler. He's tall and skinny and not real fierce-looking, but he knows how to win. He can get that critical takedown, escape when needed, manage a bout, and, boy can he ride. He was a district runner-up last year, and got a 6<sup>th</sup> at Columbus. Beachwood wrestles a tough schedule and he has prospered from that level of competition. He won at Solon and Chardon and placed at Brecksville. Dennis, a transfer from Holy Name, was 8<sup>th</sup> in Division II after having the bad luck of catching Taylor in the first round. This year he transferred to Lutheran West and won big at Elyria Catholic. He has the experience and toughness to do very well. State qualifier Harbart keeps getting better. A district 4<sup>th</sup>, he won one state bout and lost to Marmoros, 4-3. This year he was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Aurora (to Papesch), finished 4<sup>th</sup> at the Dies (losing a close bout to Lang), and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Wadsworth. He could be a finalist at this district. The scrappy Knapp should get the fourth spot. He crushed the field at Richmond Heights. He is in a difficult sectional with Harbart and Pizzuto. The winner would be away from the other two at districts – a significant advantage. Kovach is another of those always tough Chanel lightweights and could be a factor.

Sergent pinned his way through Fairmont last year and could well do it again. Still, it was interesting that all four qualifiers at 103# won at least one state bout. Ziegler and Wooten were two of that number and they have followed Sergent to 112#. I don't think either of them is safe. Longmire beat Wooten last year and almost upset Ziegler. Begg and Freeman are both solid and have placed high in every tourney. Hochwalt and Wisecup Reading) have had a string of successes and have district experience. Begg's

victory at Van Buren was impressive and he should be a real important element in the resolution of this weight class – that’s after we crown Sergent champ.

I’m puzzled at Owens. State qualifiers Rayfield, Varner and Dandurand all return (they were 0-6 at States), but the hot prospect is Alex Lopez. He has won impressively at Stryker and Arcadia but, unfortunately, was not at Van Buren or Southview where one could better judge his progress. He did beat Perez and since Perez was 6<sup>th</sup> at Waite, 3<sup>rd</sup> at Perrysburg, and 1<sup>st</sup> at Northwood it looks like he may be pretty good. The three qualifiers have done well as have Westhoven and Butcher – who was one bout from qualification last year.

### 119 #

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAT HARRINGTON (SANDUSKY ST. MARY)**

##### Top Contenders

2	Hall (Tuslaw)	14	Neer (Northmor)
3	Reynolds (Pleasant)	15	Domer (Bluffton)
4	Thoreson (Berkshire)	16	Phillips (North Baltimore)
5	Clark (Reading)	17	Bogerd (Troy Christian)
6	Gualtieri (West Jefferson)	18	Biddle (Liberty Center)
7	Karnes (Edgerton)	19	Miller (Brookfield)
8	Phillips (Waynedale)	20	Reyna (Montpelier)
9	Mascioli (Jackson Milton)	21	Deady (Triad)
10	Foster (Bellaire St. John)	22	Kuzma (Hopewell Loudon)
11	Pezzin (Swanton)	23	Burge (Norwayne)
12	Bodziony (Chanel)	24	Smith (Carlisle)
13	Stasa (Evergreen)	25	Bodenbender (Tinora)
		26	Cummins (Dixie)

Harrington had a great junior year winning 56 times, culminated by a dominating State meet where he outscored his last three opponents by a combined score of 32-3 after a first round fall. He combines excellent technique and good quickness with exceptional strength. He has been the state power lifting champ several times. This is one of the easier weight classes in Division III and a healthy Harrington must be viewed as a top-heavy favorite. Undefeated this year his closest bout was a 3-1 decision over the fast improving Thoreson at the Ohio Duals.

The toughest district is at Maple Heights. It features three returning state placers, a state qualifier, and a couple of good youngsters. Hall was 3<sup>rd</sup> at 103# at last year’s States and the two weight class jump does not seem to have impacted his strength. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Medina beating Ditcher and Bivenour and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Dies beating Boosz, 13-5. He’s a possible finalist, but is probably not as strong or as quick as Harrington. Mascioli was 6<sup>th</sup> last year and Phillips was 8<sup>th</sup> in 2005. Phillips won at Richmond Hts. and was 5<sup>th</sup> at the Dies while Mascioli has several tourney wins. However, in the last 12 months the suddenly fierce state qualifier Thoreson has defeated them both – pinning

Mascioli and shutting out Phillips. Thoreson was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon after blowing a 5-0 lead in the finals, 2<sup>nd</sup> at Kenston to Cribari and 1<sup>st</sup> at Chardon. That leaves Bodziony, Miller, and Burge needing an upset to qualify. Of this trio I think Bodziony – 6<sup>th</sup> at the CIT – has the best shot.

Harrington should have very little trouble at his district. There are again three returning state qualifiers – Pezzin, Karnes and Biddle – none of whom have placed and have one state victory between them. I think state qualifier Pezzin might be one of the better of large group of 119's massed behind Harrington. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at St. John and 2<sup>nd</sup>, in overtime, at Van Buren. Karnes, another state qualifier, was a district runner-up to Opfer last year, won at Woodmore and has beaten a number of the top boys in the last couple years. Phillips and Kuzma have traded wins and have been excellent tournament wrestlers – Phillips has two firsts, a second and a fourth – but they haven't done it in the past. I'm looking at Stasa, Reyna, and maybe, Shellhouse (Mohawk) or Oney (South Central) as possibilities. State qualifier Biddle and Bodenbender are also in the picture. Remember Biddle beat Pezzin 12-4 last year so things are very tightly bunched. In summary, its Opfer with Pezzin, Karnes and Stasa or .....

Reynolds is very impressive and the best at the Heath District. He has finalist potential. He was 4<sup>th</sup> at 112# last year pinning Toal in the quarter-finals (though Toal did beat him for 3<sup>rd</sup>). This year he won at North Union and DeSales (pinning Cribari!) and was a quarter-finalist at Brecksville before being ambushed by Pretty. He was a devastating 3-0 at the Ohio Duals. State qualifier Gualtieri had a win in Columbus, and was an excellent 3<sup>rd</sup> at Medina. He had some nice wins there – Ditcher, Powers, Brenner – and his only loss was by a point. He was also 7<sup>th</sup> at the Top Gun. That's the top duo. Neer was the state alternate last year and has been a steady winner this season. A highlight was his 2<sup>nd</sup> at Marion Harding. The last berth is completely wide-open. The freshman Foster (Johnny's brother) has had a terrific year finishing 4<sup>th</sup> at the OVAC – missing the finals by a point – and 1<sup>st</sup> at St. John. His first two losses were at the OVAC after 19 consecutive wins. Perhaps Schaffer (Fairbanks) can challenge here, but I would not be surprised to see a relative unknown qualify.

The cupboard is relatively bare at Fairmont, and that could be a break for Troy Christian. State placer Clark had an overtime first round loss at States and then won four consolation bouts. He failed to place at the SWOCA and was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Madeira, but was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Western Brown to an out-of-stater. Domer qualified at this weight last year and got pinned twice in Columbus. I think he is better this year. He beat Diglia to win the Allen County and beat Pezzin to win at Van Buren. He could be a district finalist. Bogerd was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Troy Christian and beat the excellent freshman LeForce in the preview. He was 0-2 at Brecksville, but took Payne into overtime. However Reynolds and Thoreson beat him handily at the Ohio Duals. At this district he might qualify. Deady, Smith and Cummins will battle for the last berth.

**125 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: DANIEL KOLODZIK (MIAMI VALLEY)**

*Top Contenders*

2	Hancock (Troy Christian)	15	Coomes (Pleasant)
3	Thompson (Brookfield)	16	Boney (Nelsonville-York)
4	Lawler (West Jefferson)	17	Donahue (Tuslaw)
5	Carpenter (Madeira)	18	McMurray (Berkshire)
6	Reisz (Beallsville)	19	Evans (Madison Plains)
7	Schafer (Chanel)	20	Coblentz (Waynedale)
8	Carnahan (Paulding)	21	Chapman (Hopewell Loudon)
9	Van Atta (McComb)	22	Shreve (Martins Ferry)
10	Beach (Dixie)	23	Almanza (Patrick Henry)
11	Carrisalez (Delta)	24	Costello (Sandusky St. Mary)
12	Runkle (West Salem Northwestern)	25	Halko (Ready)
13	Redd (Archbold)	26	Curcio (Toledo Christian)
14	Essenmacher (New London)	27	Perry (Smithville)

With the new weight rules coaches and wrestlers have paradoxically both more and less freedom of action. Clearly, the alpha weight calculation provides a minimum weight class below which they cannot go – even, if strategically that seems an attractive idea. On the other hand, the 50 percent rule seems to have evaporated and wrestlers can drop to their alpha weight, apparently, any time before sectionals. That said, there are some top-flight wrestlers who must decide on either 125 pounds or 130 pounds. I've rated each where I think they'll wind up based on nothing more than my own analysis.

There are six terrific 125's this year and it is one of the best weight classes in Division III. Some of the potential match-ups are things to ponder at odd moments of the day. My choice is former state champion Daniel Kolodzik. He was the 103# champ as a freshman two years ago and was 4<sup>th</sup> in that absolutely brutal 119# class last year losing to eventual champ Freeman and Wilson (in overtime). He has been everywhere this year. He lost the third-place match at the Ironman to Collin Palmer, but defeated Stephens and Hancock in the process. He won the Top Gun – pinning Lawler, and crushing Stephens and Ulinski, and was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the GMVWA this time losing to Stephens.

Right behind at that district is the surprising Hancock. He was 6<sup>th</sup> last year – wrestling up a weight – and has been terrific. He won at Brecksville beating Schafer, McCoy and Dean and went 3-0 at the Ohio Duals. He and Kolodzik will be apart at States and could be finalists.

Thompson was the state runner-up last year at 119#. It was a brilliant piece of wrestling at the toughest weight class in Division III. With two state champs, a runner-up and several previous placers, he beat Gambill and Boing to make the finals. Well, he's going to have to amaze again this year. Down from 130#, he still has some work to do. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Elyria Catholic and did not place at Medina (at 130#), but came back to

get 4<sup>th</sup> at the Top Gun and 1<sup>st</sup> at Howland. He seems to have a knack for finding the toughest weight classes.

Lawler was a Division I district semi-finalist last year at 130# and has now moved on to West Jefferson. He is fast and explosive. He looked a little overmatched at 130# at Medina and was 8<sup>th</sup> at the Top Gun losing to Kolodzik and Becker. He is very dangerous and capable of the big upset.

Schafer placed at 112# last year and now has moved up to 125#. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon and 5<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville losing a 2-0 bout to Hancock. His big win was over Vaughn. On a hot weekend he could score big at this weight class.

There are four excellent wrestlers at Fairmont. Kolodzik and Hancock could both be finalists, but there is much more. Carpenter won 44 bouts last year and finished 7<sup>th</sup> at 112# pinning Schafer. He won this year at Madeira, but did not compete at the SWOCA. I think his weaker schedule may hurt him this year as others have shown strong improvement. State qualifier Beach should capture the fourth spot making a formidable quartet of 125's going to States from this district.

Lawler may be only slightly ahead of several 125's in his district. Coomes went to State at 130# last year (note that he, Lawler and Hancock all dropped a weight class) and lost his placement bout to Hancock, 8-5. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> to Vaughn at DeSales, but did not compete at Brecksville. Both Schafer and Hancock beat him badly at the Ohio Duals, but he has bounced back since then. Reisz is a two-time state qualifier who placed 6<sup>th</sup> as a freshman and was one point from placement last year. He lost a heartbreaking 1-0 match in the OVAC finals to a two-time West Virginia state champ. He is always difficult to beat. Two-time state qualifier Boney maybe a slight favorite for that last berth. He always seems to do well at district time. Shreve, Evans, and Kornmiller (Bloom Carroll) are other contenders at this class. Watch out, in particular, for Evans. A long shot here is Halko who seems to wrestle to the level of his opponent – not always a good thing.

None of my top picks came out of the Owens District although there are strong performers there. State qualifier Carnahan was at 112# last year and went 0-2 at the State meet. Carrisalez, a transfer from Defiance, was a D-2 state qualifier and has substantial upside. Essenmacher, also a state qualifier, has a decision to make as to whether he will compete here or at 130#. I am rating him at this class. All three are solid performers, but will have trouble beating the top boys. The undefeated Van Atta should also play a role at this district. He beat Beach in overtime to win at Richmond Heights and also won at Van Buren. I was surprised he didn't qualify last year, but a narrow semi-final loss to Reindel was his downfall. Redd, I believe, will beat out one of this quartet and qualify. He was the state alternate at this class last year and will move up. Chapman, Curcio, and Kwiat (Calvert) are possibilities, but I think Almanza has the best chances of pulling the huge upset. I wonder about Costello – Harrington's back-up last year – who is now at 125#.

With Schafer and Thompson relatively safe, most of the top challengers for the other two spots come from the Southern sectional. My thoughts are Runkle and Donahue, but Perry and Coblenz are also good. Runkle was a state qualifier last year and that experience should be a touchstone for success this year. McMurray who caught and pinned Schafer at the Ohio Duals (he always has trouble with the Berkshire boys) has forced himself into the picture with yet another win at Chardon.

### **130 #**

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: DARRIN BOING (CHANEL)**

##### Top Contenders

2	Gambill (Miami East)	15	Espinoza (Genoa)
3	J. Thome (Troy Christian)	16	Jones (Waterford)
4	Schumaker (Arcadia)	17	Smith (Tuslaw)
5	Clark (Union Local)	18	Weatherholt (Garaway)
6	D'Alessandro (Beachwood)	19	Elkins (Ayersville)
7	Crispin (West Jefferson)	20	Malave (Lutheran West)
8	Demas (Pleasant)	21	Hazelwood (Blanchester)
9	Pike (Greeneview)	22	Roerig (Montpelier)
10	Young (Norwayne)	23	O'Bradovich (Sandy Valley)
11	Bernath (Archbold)	24	Grubach (VASJ)
12	Clum (Spencerville)	25	McDonald (Plymouth)
13	Edgell (Crestview)	26	Abbey (Wellington)
14	Cesar (Madeira)	27	Craft (Seneca East)

There are four strong candidates here with different styles of winning. There is the seasoned veteran Boing, the flashy Schumaker, the young and athletic Thome, and the former state champion Gambill. It would not be in any way unusual if any of this four won – they all have strong credentials including previous state placement and exceptional results this year. I eliminate Schumaker with too easy a schedule and Thome – with losses to Boing and Gambill in the last 12 months. That forces a choice between Boing and Gambill and I have agonized over this decision for weeks. Let it be Boing.

Boing has wrestled an incredibly difficult schedule to prepare himself for the state ordeal. He won at Solon over Johnson, 5-3, and was 1<sup>st</sup> at Brecksville beating Thome in the final, 6-4, a repeat victory after his consolation win over Thome at States. He was perfect at the Ohio Duals at 135# and then won the CIT beating Sulzer and Melillo. He then defeated Skonieczny to win the Big 8. It's an amazing record and it makes him arguably the best 130 pounder in any division in Ohio. Still, the one worry is that something always happens to him at States. He has placed three times, but has never been a finalist.

The Maple Heights District shouldn't stress Boing. D'Alesandro was the state alternate last year as a sophomore and his go-to-state bout, as it turned out, was pivotal. He lost

a narrow 2-1 decision to Thompson who then went on to upset both Gambill and Boing at States and finish 2<sup>nd</sup>. D'Allesandro has had a fine year winning at Chardon and placing 4<sup>th</sup> at Solon. Former state qualifier Justin Young is also back after getting a 3<sup>rd</sup> at the WIT and winning at Chippewa. After that anything could happen. Miller could move up to 130# or Smith, Abbey and Malave could get hot. Grubach, the Richmond Hts. winner, has been out of the line-up recently but he, too, could be a factor.

I think Gambill may have peaked too early last year when he won that brutal district last year. He beat Kolodzik and Thome – by technical fall – but then had, by his standards – a terrible States, finishing 7<sup>th</sup>. He and Thome will again be together generally well ahead of the rest of the field. State qualifier Pike won at Elyria Catholic defeating state runner-up Thompson in the semi-finals. He missed qualification by one bout last year and cannot be overlooked. Ceasar was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the SWOCA and that catapults into contention for a state berth. Clum was the state alternate last year beating Ceasar in that 5<sup>th</sup> place bout. If they meet this year it could be for state qualification. Hazelwood is also a possibility.

Assuming Essenmacher is at 125# that leaves three returning state qualifiers at Owens. Schumaker is a defending district champion who entered last year's State meet undefeated. He lost to Freeman in the quarter-finals and eventually placed 5<sup>th</sup> – up one spot from his freshman result. He has had another dominating year winning at Van Buren, Arcadia, and elsewhere, but has not wrestled a difficult schedule. Edgell and Bernath have both made state appearances. Edgell was 5<sup>th</sup> at the Gorman (the top Division III placer) while Bernath won at Archbold. Espinoza and Elkins might have the inside track for a state berth with Roerig, Craft or Willard transfer McDonald a possibility.

Clark was 6<sup>th</sup> last year and is nominally the leader at Heath. He was the district runner-up and put together a 40+ win season. Again this year he has been excellent – winning at Union Local, Shadyside and Barnesville. His only loss was at the OVAC where he finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lawler and Crispin have traded places and the latter boy is now at this class. A state qualifier last year, he should fit in comfortably here. I was really impressed with the freshman Demas at Brecksville. Sure, he'll lose some bouts this year, but he'll pull an upset or two as well. He was a semi-finalist at Brecksville beating Dinda, Melillo, and McHenry before reality (in the form of Boing) took hold in the semi-finals. He's a keeper. State alternate Jones lost his go-to-state bout 9-8 to Crispin. He should get out this year. Weatherholt and O'Bradovich are other random thoughts.

**135 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: CASEY THOME (TROY CHRISTIAN)**

Top Contenders

2	Toney (Mechanicsburg)	15	McDaniel (Pleasant)
3	Jenkins (Berkshire)	16	Vogepohl (Genoa)
4	Harnett (Brookfield)	17	Eavers (Greeneview)
5	Rufenacht (Archbold)	18	Foster (VASJ)
6	Zolman (Northmor)	19	Oliver (Versailles)
7	Dierkes (Jackson Milton)	20	Howe (Blanchester)
8	Padach (South Range)	21	Jorkos (Ayersville)
9	J. Pfister (Black River)	22	Brown (Newark Catholic)
10	Basting (Huron)	23	Lewis (West Liberty Salem)
11	Chilson (Bellaire)	24	Neuenschwander (Dalton)
12	Border (Caldwell)	25	French (Middletown Madison)
13	Reindel (Stritch)	26	Chandler (South Central)
14	Hill (Liberty Center)	27	Holt (Martins Ferry)
		28	Bemmes (Reading)

This weight class looks very similar in structure to what we see at 119#. One dominating figure, a couple of possible high placers and what is likely to be a relatively weak 16-main bracket. The dominating figure is the senior, Casey Thome, looking at his last, best chance for a state title. Thome was 3<sup>rd</sup> two years ago at 112#, but jumped to 125# where he lost to Koballa 12-6 in the finals. A useful measuring device is Brett Freeman who beat Thome 7-5 in 2005 and then lost to him 8-0 in last year's semi-finals. I believe that is a good measure of his progress. He caught Koballa in the finals on a very good weekend and the Junior National runner-up wrestled beautifully to win 12-6. There is nobody of that quality at 135# this year. Thome was a semi-finalist at the Ironman (losing to the eventual champ) and captured 5<sup>th</sup> with a 10-3 win over Gasber. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Brecksville, losing rather badly to Pelton in the semis in a rather strange bout.

A possible threat to Thome at the Fairmont District (and States) is Toney. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at both the district and state meets and won 52 bouts last year. At States he lost in the first round and then won five consecutive consolation bouts. The year he was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Western Brown. State qualifier Derek Oliver also returns after going 2 and out at the state Meet – losing the last one in overtime to Crispin. French had 20 consecutive wins before losing at Reading to Howe – who also defeated Bemmes there. This trio, along with Hanson Madeira, are probably the main combatants for at least one state spot and possibly two. The way I see it Thome and Toney are safe, but the “wolves” are clamoring on Oliver's heels.

There is a pair of returning place-winners at Maple Hts., but both boys placed two years ago. Jenkins was 4<sup>th</sup> at 119# and qualified for States last year, but was injured and could not compete. He started the year at 140#, but has since settled in at this weight

class. He was 1<sup>st</sup> at Chardon, but only 5<sup>th</sup> at Kenston – just after making this weight. He gave Boing a good battle losing, 3-1, and he should do well at this class. Padach, also a state qualifier, was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Richmond Hts. Excellent in the top position, he needs to be better on his feet. Harnett was 7<sup>th</sup> two years ago, but failed to qualify out at last year's tough district. In fact he lost his go-to-state bout to Skaggs who went on to be a State finalist. He just won at Howland and seems to be rounding into shape. State alternate Dierkes should qualify this year. He lost his go-to-state bout to Chasteen, 12-11, last year and ended up 5<sup>th</sup>. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Elyria Catholic at 140# after getting caught by Bill in the semi-final. He has state ability. Also here is the younger Pfister, Josh, though he and his brother might easily switch. He was 4<sup>th</sup> at the Dies and has a lot of upside. Foster wrestled at Columbus as the State alternate when Jenkins could not. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Hawken, but did not compete at Richmond Hts. He was a quarter-finalist at the CIT but lost by technical fall his last two bouts. A very strong contender would have been Casella (Wickliffe), but an injury at Richmond Hts. wiped out his season. Neuenschwander and Selage (Columbia Station) might be other contenders.

Basting is the best 135-pounder I've seen from the Owens District. A state qualifier last year, he looked terrific at Richmond Hts., ripping everyone on his way to the title. He has not wrestled recently, but I assume he will be healthy for the tournaments. Rufenacht has been at 140#, but I think we might see him here. It makes strategic sense to get away from all those dynamite 140's. He beat Petrella 4-0 at 140# and he should feel very confident at this class. Hill and Vogepohl are both solid and could qualify. State qualifier Reindel is also at this weight, but he will be in a fierce struggle to get out. He won at Northwood and Archbold, Jorkos, winner at Woodmore, and Chandler, who won on a pin of Oliver at Plymouth, are also possibilities. Having a hot hand the weekend of districts will be needed here, maybe that's how Johnson (Otsego) or Casey (Elmwood) will make it.

Heath is a very competitive district with lots of talent. Zolman was 7<sup>th</sup> at 125# and should slot in nicely at this weight class. He's missed a good part of the year with injuries, but should be ready by tournament time. State alternate Chilson and state qualifier Border lead the Eastern District prospects. Chilson won the OVAC, but the key win was a 10-9 semi-final victory of Border. Not a lot to choose between them, although Chilson has had the better year. Merryman and Holt are also strong, but may struggle reaching States. State qualifier Brown is another possibility, but McDaniel may vault past him with team momentum Pleasant is likely to generate. Two other possibilities here – and good ones – are Irwin and Norway (Nelsonville-York).

**140 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOSH FALK (BLUFFTON)**

Top Contenders

2	Hermes (Sandusky St. Mary)	15	Porter (Bellaire)
3	Toal (Troy Christian)	16	McCreary (Fairbanks)
4	Gardella (Chanel)	17	Woody (Chippewa)
5	Nelson (Madison Plains)	18	Ash (Waynedale)
6	Gombash (Delta)	19	Betts (Elmwood)
7	Grigson (Northwood)	20	Sadler (Beachwood)
8	Pajestka (Cuyahoga Hts.)	21	Wagner (Genoa)
9	C. Pfister (Black River)	22	Hayes (Madeira)
10	Levy (West Liberty Salem)	23	McCoy (Pleasant)
11	Petrella (Hartley)	24	Bill (Clearview)
12	Prickett (Monroe Central)	25	Beam (Cardington)
13	Franks (Fremont St. Joseph)	26	Runyon (Blanchester)
14	Dauski (Sandy Valley)	27	Levy (Hicksville)
		28	Manrique (Trinity)

This is easily the best weight class in Division III, and I anticipate that we'll see movement either up to 140# or down to 135#, alpha weights allowing. At this moment the top six contenders include two state champions, a state runner-up, a two-time state placer, and two wrestlers who have placed in the top four.

Falk had his 86 bout winning streak snapped in last year's state finals losing a highly anticipated match-up with Kevin Lipp. Fifth as a freshman, he raced through the state bracket as a sophomore barely challenged in any of his bouts. Last year he beat D-2 champ, Jake Kyle, in the Graham tourney and had three dominating wins before losing to Lipp. This year he has not really been challenged by his opponents or his schedule.

Toal is a dynamite kid, but he is up five weight classes and will not be the biggest 140 pounder in the bracket sheet. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> last year at 112# getting caught by Reynolds (who he later pinned for 3<sup>rd</sup>) and missing out an opportunity to meet Opfer, who he had beaten in the dual, in the semi-finals. This year he did not place at the Ironman, but was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Brecksville losing in overtime to McGovern. I don't know about this year, but this sophomore will win at least one state title. He and Falk exit the same district splitting them (very likely) in the state bracket and giving them two chances to see each other.

The big unknown is Hernes. He was 4<sup>th</sup> as a sophomore, but missed much of last year with injuries. Now at 140# he has been devastating in early season action, beating, for example, the excellent Lowe, 8-2, in a recent dual, and picking up three quick falls at the Ohio Duals. The St. Mary coaches are high on him, a very good sign of excellence.

State champion Nelson was way better than I anticipated going 46-0 at 130# and taking home a state title. Of the 42 state champions he was the lowest rated in last year's report and it is embarrassing to miss that badly on a superior wrestler. Well, I'm giving him yet another opportunity to outperform my expectations. He lost once at 152# (why up there I don't know), but is again undefeated otherwise. I'm just not sure he can match the firepower of a Falk or a Toal, but, clearly, I've been wrong before.

Gardella has been 5<sup>th</sup> twice losing both times in the semi-finals. I think this may be his year to take that final step, but as you can see from earlier paragraphs it won't be easy. He was terrific at Solon, beating both Lowe and Division I state runner-up Clopton to win the title, but was only 7<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville, losing early to McGovern.

Skaggs was a surprise runner-up at 135# last year after finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the Maple Hts. District and barely qualifying for state action. It shows that getting to Columbus is the important thing and Skaggs made good use of that opportunity, winning his first three bouts. This year he was 1<sup>st</sup> at Elyria Catholic and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon, losing only to two-time D-1 champ Kevin Hardy. All this at 145# where I anticipate he may return by tourney time, and where I will rank him.

With Falk and Toal at this class only two state berths are open at Fairmont. One should go to Levy, who, if the bracket gods were unkind and put Toal and Falk together, could be a finalist at this district. Nelson beat him by five in the first round and he ended up winning one consolation bout. Hayes, Runyon, and Monasmith (Preble Shawnee) have all won tournaments and will be in the hunt for that fourth qualifying spot. Hayes was the state alternate last year, but Levy beat him 19-3. All three of them have district experience.

Gardella leads the way at Maple Hts., but confusion as to weight class reigns supreme. The two contenders for the other three berths with the most credentials are two-time state qualifier Pajestka and state qualifier Pfister – although there is certainly some chance that the latter boy might go 135#. Pfister was 5<sup>th</sup> last year at 135# and he is very good, yet he failed to place this year at the Dies although I believe that to be an aberration. Pajestka lost an overtime bout in his state placement bout. I confess – he always does better than I anticipate. He was a semi-finalist at Brecksville – pinned by Toal – and ended up 5<sup>th</sup>. He won at Cuyahoga Hts. and is dangerous. Ash and Woody are old rivals from the southern sectional (with Ash winning his share) even though I think Woody might be slightly the better wrestler. Sadler, Bill, and Manrique are all very good and that makes six boys looking to fill the last three spots. You'll see some weight changing and some heartbreak here.

I think Hermes dominates at Owens. He is just too strong for the rest of the field. State qualifier Grigson is probably next best as the Northwood star continues to win. Franks and Gombash should get the last two spots. The first named was a state alternate last year and was 4<sup>th</sup> at the CIT and second to Falk at Van Buren. Gombash qualified at this class last year, but was a point short of placement. Gombash could be a finalist at this

district. I think Betts, Wagner, and maybe, Levy, have the best shot of unseating one of my top four here. Betts was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Van Buren, 2<sup>nd</sup> at St. John and 1<sup>st</sup> at Arcadia.

Nelson should win this district again, but there are some other potential placers competing. Dauski and Prickett both have past state experience. Prickett lost his state quarter-final bout, 13-12, and then the ensuing placement bout 10-8, so he's close. The last time we saw Dauski at States he was a 112-pound freshman. Prickett was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the OVAC and won at Barnesville and was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Shadyside. He and Aaron Porter are very close, splitting two bouts with Porter getting 2<sup>nd</sup> at the OVAC. Dauski crushed everyone at Richmond Hts., beating Ash in the finals. Petrella and McCreary lead the Columbus area contingent with McCroy very close. Petrella was the state alternate last year of this weight and was 5<sup>th</sup> at the CIT. Watch out for state alternate Beam.

### 145 #

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: TREVER DAVIS (PLEASANT)**

##### Top Contenders

2	Burns (Troy Christian)	14	Albanese (Fairbanks)
3	Fose (Middletown Madison)	15	Zaborski (Collins Western Reserve)
4	Skaggs (Jackson Milton)	16	Kosky (Bellaire St. John)
5	Cloran (Madeira)	17	Randolph (Belpre)
6	Hill (McComb)	18	Bush (Black River)
7	Bogan (Wellington)	19	Hessick (Fremont St. Joseph)
8	Burris (Archbold)	20	Grys New London)
9	Ford (Allen East)	21	Mark (West Salem Northwestern)
10	Stiltner (Waynedale)	22	Lewis (West Liberty Salem)
11	Garrett (Madison Plains)	23	Hunter (Manchester)
12	D'Alessandro (Beachwood)	24	Reyes (Cleveland Central Catholic)
13	Howe (Northmor)	25	Yunker (Toledo Christian)
		26	White /Casserlee (Dixie)

This could well be a weight class in transition. With the 140# class loaded with great performers, and with 152# very nearly as good, we might expect some movement in this direction. Maybe, a Gallik or a True might drop down, or a Skaggs move up, which could change the general complexion of this class.

There is a conceit that if a Division I or II wrestler drops down to Division III he will immediately do far better than before. Sometimes that is true, at other times – well, maybe, not. The next two weight classes will be additional test cases as Davis and Moore transferred from Mt. Vernon. Davis is very good. He was 7<sup>th</sup> last year, losing in the championship round to two-time state champ Kevin Hardy, 7-6. He would, clearly, have been in the top five in Division I. At Pleasant he has won at DeSales, tech falling state qualifier Wagers in the finals. He was, however, 7<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville, losing twice to Division III wrestlers, and was 2-1 at the Ohio Duals.

The surprise here has been Chris Burns. He failed to qualify for States and had 11 losses during the season. This year it's been a different story. He won at Troy Christian and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Brecksville, including a fall over Davis and a decision over Lowe. He was undefeated at the Ohio Duals, shutting out Davis 2-0. Based strictly on performance he has led the way at this weight class. He has beaten Davis twice and I think it is very difficult to defeat a comparable three consecutive times.

If Burns is to do well he'll have to start in his own district. Fose was 5<sup>th</sup> last year winning three state bouts. He was 1<sup>st</sup> at Reading with a crushing triumph and is undefeated this year. If he can beat Burns he could be a state finalist. Also here is state qualifier Cloran who has had another good year. He beat Ford to win at Madeira and was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the SWOCA only to Gobin – and that by 2-0. These are three placers as I look at it. Ford and Lewis might be the best candidates for that fourth spot. The White/Casselman pairing at Dixie could also be a factor – especially if we go tag team.

Davis faces a slightly easier district. I believe that his most dangerous challengers are from the Columbus sectionals. Garrett is a former state qualifier who has struggled some now that he has gotten big. Howe went into overtime last year in his go-to-state bout before losing. This year he was perfect at the Ohio Duals and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Gorman losing only to McEntire. Albanese was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Richmond Hts. and 1<sup>st</sup> at Alder and he is good on top. This monopoly may well be broken up by OVAC runner-up Zach Kosky. He also won at Bellaire St. John. A bigger threat might be Randolph who qualified at 152# last year. He was 2-2 at Medina in a tough weight class.

There are three excellent 145's at Owens. Hill was the district champion at 135# last year, but had a total flame-out at Columbus and was gone by Thursday night. This year he opened with 21 consecutive wins including the title at Richmond Hts. over Stiltner, but was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Van Buren losing to Ford – not a good sign. Ortolani was 7<sup>th</sup> at this weight class last year and is part of St. Mary's Big Four (with Opfer, Harrington, and Hermes). They have wrestled mainly dual meets where Ortolani has done very well. He should place again this year. Burris had a district 2<sup>nd</sup> last year and he is just so solid. He, too, had a bad Thursday night at States, but I think he could well get to Saturday this year. Zaborski and Grys have good chances, but they come out of Ortolani's sectional and many not get good district pairings. Hessick is another contender.

If Skaggs moves back to 145# he would be the favorite at this district. If not, state qualifiers Bogan and Stiltner will face off. Bogan won a state bout and finished 6<sup>th</sup> this year at a tough Medina weight class. Stiltner was a major surprise in qualifying last year, but it has been a good foundation for him. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> to Hill at Richmond losing, 4-3, and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Dies losing to McEntire. It won't be a surprise if he qualifies this year. De'Alesandro should be very competitive in relation to a qualifying spot winning most recently at Chardon. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Solon losing to Skaggs, 9-3. Other possibilities include Bush, Mark and Hunter. A surprise candidate might be Reyes.

**152 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEDD MOORE (PLEASANT)**

Top Contenders

2	Thatcher (Loudonville)	16	Kwiat (Calvert)
3	Reer (Collins Western Reserve)	17	Wasylik (Sandusky St. Mary)
4	Campbell (Troy Christian)	18	Rohn (Tuslaw)
5	Gallik (Northmor)	19	Packard (Belpre)
6	Foley (Worthington Christian)	20	Short (Archbold)
7	Smyers (Norwayne)	21	Lee (Elmwood)
8	True (Arcadia)	22	Deetz (Garaway)
9	Richardson (Berkshire)	23	Schroeder (Montpelier)
10	Skoff (Bridgeport)	24	Domres (Licking Hts.)
11	Tucker (Martins Ferry)	25	Batesole (Elyria Catholic)
12	Barr (Blanchester)	26	Enos (Oberlin)
13	Smith (Miami East)	27	Kirkman (Sandy Valley)
14	Kreinbihl (Indian Valley)	28	Holmes (Spencerville)
15	Schmitmeyer (Versailles)	29	Parsons (Ledgemont)

Marion Pleasant was certainly going to have an excellent team just on what was returning last year, but the addition of Davis and Moore pushed them right into the co-favorite role with Troy Christian. It's a superior team now, but the crown jewel is the junior Jedd Moore. Last year at Mt. Vernon he was the district champion at Darby (beating the excellent Vaccari 9-1 in the finals), and then won three state bouts before losing to four-time champ Lance Palmer in the finals – the only wrestler to go the full six minutes with him. Then in April he won the NHSCA in Pittsburgh, capping an excellent season. This year Moore has been a scoring machine, winning big against most everyone. His only loss was to Division II pick Eric Cubberly in the Brecksville, but he later pinned Cubberly in the dual.

Moore will be a heavy favorite, but make no mistake this is an excellent field with Moore exiting the best district. Gallik was 2<sup>nd</sup> (in overtime) at the Gorman and was unbeaten at the Ohio Duals. He took the title at Marian Harding over Bragg. I'm not sure he can do much against Moore, but everybody else is fair game. Foley won at Richmond Hts. and Dublin while finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> at DeSales on a fall to Moore. Skoff was a pinning machine along the river winning his first 21 bouts before losing an overtime semi-final at the OVAC and finishing 5<sup>th</sup>. Tucker has missed much of the year, but was 6<sup>th</sup> at the OVAC in his first appearance back. Anytime you see the combination of Tucker and Martins Ferry you know you'll find a good wrestler. State qualifier Kreinbihl had a difficult state draw and went 0-2. He wrestles a low visibility schedule – but does it well – and may be in trouble at this weight class. He won at Coshocton at 160#, but there is not much relief there. I saw Packard at Medina and he did well. He met state champ Straughn in the quarter-finals and went the full six minutes. He could slip in here with an upset or two. Domres and Kirkman are out of luck at this weight class.

One of the possible finalists Moore might face is Eric Reer. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at 140# two years ago and I thought he would be a sure winner over the next two years. In that run he beat Steve Wilson, 2-0. Then last year he missed most of the year because of injuries and came back only long enough to knockout my choice at this weight class. Now healthy he beat Roth to win at Tiffin and Schwartz at Clyde and seems ready to challenge Moore. True is next best after qualifying at 135# last year. He has won three tournaments, but was upset at Van Buren by Kwiat. Still, he's a possible district finalist and state placer. After that the bracket sheet will look pretty shaky. Wasylik went deep into last year's district and Kwiat did win over True and Lee at Van Buren. Maybe, Short or Schroeder is the answer.

This will be Thatcher 's third trip to Columbus and it's time for him to place. Last year Wilson knocked him off in the quarter-finals and Heasley eliminated him. Can't happen this year, they're both at 160#. He should win the Maple Heights District, setting him up for one last run for the podium. This year he beat Gallik to win at the Gorman, won at Riverside and won at Wadsworth. That kind of consistency could get him into the finals. This will also be Smyers third trip to state. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at that tough 152# class at the WIT – beating Harris, but losing to Colman. He won at Chippewa and the Dies – the latter with a 7-6 win over the tough Hough. Richardson was the state alternate at 160# and won at Chardon, 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon, and 3<sup>rd</sup> at Kenston. Add in, perhaps, Rohn or Pajestka (Cuyahoga Hts.), and it's a pretty solid group. Enos or Batesole might be another thought.

Note that Moore has one primary challenger at both Owens (Reer) and Maple Hts. (Thatcher). That model holds at Fairmont where Robel Cambell is the wrestler to watch. A transfer from Dayton Christian, he was 4<sup>th</sup> last year at 135# after losing a first round bout. He was 8<sup>th</sup> at the Ironman and 4<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville losing to Cubberly and Erdman. He, too, has finalist potential. State qualifier Barr returns winning at Reading and boasting an 18-3 record. GMVWA place-winner Schmitmeyer is next best, but was only 5<sup>th</sup> at Plymouth. Hmm. Maybe, Smith has gone by him despite finishing behind him at the GMVWA. Holmes is another possibility.

**160 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE WILSON (PLEASANT)**

Top Contenders

2	Tice (Brookfield)	15	Knipp (Archbold)
3	Yant (Delta)	16	Lehman (Arcadia)
4	Scavuzzo (Woodridge)	17	Sneary (Allen East)
5	Heasley (Worthington Christian)	18	Ackley (Elmwood)
6	Sowers (Mohawk)	19	Burns (Troy Christian)
7	Blosser (Dixie)	20	Worthington (Crestview)
8	Schaefer (West Salem Northwestern)	21	Rossiter (Shenandoah)
9	Ziegler (Mechanicsburg)	22	Chandler (South Central)
10	Porter (Berkshire)	23	Mehling (Grandview Hts.)
11	Bowers (Martins Ferry)	24	Meyer (Reading)
12	Backus (Delphos St. John)	25	Fritter (Barnesville)
13	Angle (Ridgewood)	26	Panno (Blanchester)
14	Taylor (Springfield Northeastern)	27	Leonhard (Pymatuning Valley)

I first saw Steve Wilson two years ago at Brecksville where he erupted like a whirlwind, beating state runner-up Grant Hoppel by a technical fall and almost defeating another state runner-up Mikey Davis. All I could see were state titles (note the plural) in his future. As a freshman he was 8<sup>th</sup> (he had a bad quarter-final) and last year he was 4<sup>th</sup> – out muscled by the powerful seniors Hoff and Lerer. So if it's to be plural titles it has to start this year, and I think it will. He looked great at Brecksville, winning in the finals over Mills, but I was more impressed by his 9-3 victory over the powerful state qualifier Dukes. His only blemish was an early season loss to two-time Division II place winner David Fisher, but I don't see that happening in Division III.

I picked Tice to win last year at 152#, but it didn't happen. He had an incredibly bad break of catching Reer – coming off an injury up a weight class – in the first round and ended up winning three bouts to finish 7<sup>th</sup>. He seems to thrive at Medina; this year losing in the semi-finals 9-6 to two-time champ Nemeč and finishing 3<sup>rd</sup>. I think he has the best chance to knock off Wilson, but he'll go into that bout as an underdog.

Wilson has a formidable foe in his own district. Heasley won at Richmond Hts., Alder and Dublin. He was 5<sup>th</sup> last year at 145# and since he'll be separate from Wilson in the brackets, has a chance to be a finalist. Wilson beat him 8-3 in last year's district final. Bowers and Rossiter were 2-3 at the OVAC and are the best along the river, though I think Fritter might do well once he gets used to the weight. Perkins is a possibility here with Mehling in that same category. The one to watch, though, is Angle. He went deep into last year's district and has done well this year. He was Beaver Local and Coshocton finishing ahead of Rossiter.

Tice will have several obstacles on a way to a district title. Scavuzzo was a state qualifier at 152# and went 1-2. He lost a one-pointer (5-4) to Heasley in the finals at

Richmond Hts. and was second at Wadsworth to McCurdy by that same score. Schaefer also went to States and like Scavuzzo went 1-2. He lost to Scavuzzo 1-0. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Gorman losing only to DeLong. That makes a nice threesome, but I'm not sure that Porter hasn't substantially narrowed the gap from last year. He was 1<sup>st</sup> and the OW at Chardon, 1<sup>st</sup> at Kenston, and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Solon. He was also 3-0 at the Ohio Duals. Grilley and Leonhard are other contenders hoping that one of the top quartet get squeezed in the brackets.

Two wrestlers stand out at Owens. Sowers is a returning state qualifier who failed to place. Ironically, he lost, 1-0, to Wolff in the district consolation finals. Wolff got a great draw and wrestled even better to finish 2<sup>nd</sup>. Sowers big win was at the Gorman where he took the title over DeLong. Yant is very strong. He beat Thomusseit in overtime to win at the GMVWA and vault to the top of my list at this district. That has to be a watershed win. He was a state quarter-finalist last year as a sophomore and ended up 7<sup>th</sup>. At Perrysburg he lost 6-3 to Witt in the finals, so that's two high quality opponents he has hung with. There is a substantial fall-off after this duo. I think Ackley and Knipp are likely next month, but the last two spots will spark some contentious contests. Worthington and Lehman are next in line with Chandler the long-shot. Don't be surprised to see a Tracy (Paulding) or a Tammerine (Liberty Center) have a once-in-a-lifetime weekend and qualify.

Fairmont is a district with lots of questions to be answered. The defending district champ Zack Ziegler has missed most of the year because of injuries. If he is healthy he'll win it again and, perhaps, be looking at a middle to low place at States. Blosser was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Richmond Hts. losing, 2-1, to Heasley. Currently 25-3, he will challenge Ziegler this year. State qualifiers Backus and Taylor are favorites for the last two state tickets, but will have plenty of competition. Sneary has been very good while Meyer and Panno have district experience and have been successful in smaller tourneys. Sneary was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Van Buren beating Ackley. The wild card is Burns. He went 2-0 with Porter in losing at the Ohio Duals and won a couple bouts at Brecksville before forfeiting. I'm not sure what to expect from him.

**171 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: HUNTER REED (CRESTVIEW)**

Top Contenders

2	Wolff (Genoa)	15	Oliver (Versailles)
3	Kennedy (Manchester)	16	Starr (Hannibal River)
4	Klaus (Mechanicsburg)	17	Kunk (Coldwater)
5	Cartwright (Mohawk)	18	Owens (Harvest Prep)
6	Inks (West Jefferson)	19	Roeder (Waynedale)
7	Gallik (Northmor)	20	Brickner (McComb)
8	Adams (Pleasant)	21	Jenkins (Woodridge)
9	Jump (Grandview Hts.)	22	Welling (Reading)
10	Schwab (Clinton Massie)	23	Boyce (Collins Western Reserve)
11	Barber (Nelsonville-York)	24	Camper (Riverdale)
12	Perez (Stryker)	25	Akins (Troy Christian)
13	Lewis (West Liberty Salem)	26	Cutler (Grand Valley)
14	Szente (Elyria Catholic)		

You would think that an underclassman (non-senior) who finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state tournament would have a very good chance of winning the state title the following year. After all he would be older, stronger, and, presumably, wiser; and the pressures of being in the finals would, at the least, be known. However, the facts suggest that such a hypothesis may not be true. Looking at just the last couple of years (and maybe we should in the future expand the sample) there have been 36 returning state runners-up of whom only 11 won a state title. That translates to just over 30%, far lower than one might expect. We'll generate two more data points this year at 171#, as the top two contenders both finished 2<sup>nd</sup> last year.

My choice is Hunter Reed, who was 2<sup>nd</sup> at this weight last year for Crestview. In both district and state action last year Reed dominated every opponent with the exception of Nick Purdue. At the district he beat his three other foes by a combined 42-6 margin and in Columbus it was by 32-10. This year he was in complete control at the Gorman, winning by technical fall in the finals against a returning state qualifier.

One the other hand, Wolff, too, has some advantages, after finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> at 160# last year. First, he has wrestled a much more testing and rigorous schedule than Reed. He went 3-2 at the Ironman, losing to Division II stalwarts Cody Magrum and David Thompson, and was a solid 2<sup>nd</sup> at Medina, losing only to Roddy. He had wins over Phillips, Hughes, and state placer Stewart. Second, his teammate and workout partner Purdue wrestled Reed several times and may provide some lines of action.

Both these boys exit the Owens sectional so they should be apart in Columbus. Cartwright, a state qualifier at 152# has moved up two weight classes. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Gorman, but lost to Reed 22-7 in the finals. However, he was 3<sup>rd</sup> at GMVWA losing only to Rhoads. The fourth spot is wide open. Could lightning strike twice in one weight

class for Stryker. Two years ago Jacob Hale took the state title for Stryker at this weight class, and now Joel Perez certainly has good qualification chances. He won at Van Buren and Stryker. Also here are Brickner, Boyce and Camper.

Probably the deepest district is at Heath. I count, at this moment, five returning state qualifiers plus two other solid contenders. It would not surprise me to see one or two move up to 189#. The top three are all from the Columbus sectionals and seem to have about the same overall expectations. Gallik, a state qualifier at 160#, is part of a very good Northmor team. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Marion Harding and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Gorman losing to Cartwright, 11-7. Inks was 8<sup>th</sup> at Medina after finishing 8<sup>th</sup> at the State Meet. He was a quarter-finalist at the Top Gun, but lost two close bouts and failed to place. He was at the top of my list for this district early in the year, but I'm not sure he should still hold that rank. Adam, another state qualifier, was 6<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville losing twice to Division I McKinley. He won at North Union and DeSales and was perfect at the Ohio Duals. Owens, a state qualifier two years ago, wrestles an almost invisible schedule, but I don't think he can compete well with this top trio. The Columbus wrestler to watch is Jump. He looked very good at Richmond Hts, winning handily and was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Dublin. He'll be a real load next year. The problem for him will be to negotiate all the "minefields" at this district. Starr, also a state qualifier, was 4<sup>th</sup> at the OVAC and is the only real contender from that huge league at this weight class. It's a much tougher district than he faced last year. The wrestler who cannot be forgotten is Barber. He was a district semi-finalist at this weight class last year before Adams sneaked past him 11-8 to go to State. They may not be that lucky with him this year.

One of the real threats to the Owens twosome could be Klaus. He was 6<sup>th</sup> last year losing to Reed 14-5 in the semi-finals. He is a solid performer at this district at 171# and his scores at the Ohio Duals bring this into focus. He lost 12-10 to Wilson who moved up to challenge him, and then dropped a close 3-2 decision to Wolff. He is a goer. State qualifiers Schwab and Kunk also return, but I think they are slightly behind Klaus. Neither placed at Columbus. Schwab is coming back to his more natural weight after having to give it up to Cole Ross last year. Oliver gave Klaus a good battle earlier in the year and might be the fourth qualifier. Lewis is very good and he may well push out one of the top boys. I think Kunk might be vulnerable. Throw in Akins and Welling and I think we've touched all the bases.

I think there is only one wrestler who really matters at Maple Heights. State qualifier Caleb Kennedy has moved down to 171# and should be a major factor in State tournament. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Richmond Hts. at 189# (losing to Neff) and took the title at Wadsworth at that same weight class. He moved down at the Dies and sparkled, beating Roman for the title. Szente and Jenkins are possible factors as is the inconsistent Roeder. Cutler is another possibility, but they'll be some surprises at districts.

**189 #**

**PROJECTED CHAMPION: NICK PURDUE (GENOA)**

Top Contenders

2	Hughes (Seneca East)	16	Oliver (Versailles)
3	Cummins (Cardington)	17	Zang (Hartley)
4	Neff (Waynedale)	18	White (Calvert)
5	Kirian (Mohawk)	19	Bowers (Pleasant)
6	Porter (Berkshire)	20	Hannum (Brooklyn)
7	Ball (Amanda-Clearcreek)	21	Cheesman (Crestview)
8	Wasserbeck (North Union)	22	Homan (Coldwater)
9	Steigerwald (Kirtland)	23	Rupert (Middletown Madison)
10	Michael (Carlisle)	24	Endicott (Plymouth)
11	Nester (Grand Valley)	25	Caudill (Spencerville)
12	McClory (Liberty Center)	26	Ewing (West Salem Northwestern)
13	McGillvary (Miami East)	27	Kahl (Shadyside)
14	Gault (Pymatuning Valley)	28	Evans (Stryker)
15	Miller (Dayton Jefferson)	29	Viola (VASJ)

Wrestling is a sport where spectators can often gain an insight into each competitor's demeanor and personality. After all we sit close by and the wrestlers are not hidden by helmets or masks, and, in addition, it is an individual sport where each element of the bout reflects directly on the wrestler. Now I don't know Nick Purdue, but observing him compete suggests he is the friendliest of souls and someone who enjoys the sport and the linkages within it. He is also by far the best 189-pounder in Division III>

Last year he romped through the 171-pound bracket with his closest bout a 9-3 finals win over Hunter Reed. This year he was 4<sup>th</sup> at the Ironman losing only to Honeycutt and Weakley – my picks in the other two school classifications. At Medina he romped into the finals before again losing to Honeycutt, 6-3 – Honeycutt's closest bout of the year. Particularly impressive was his 15-6 major decision over returning Division I place-winner Dan Canfield. Absent carelessness, Purdue should take home his second state title and join Nick Cianciola as Genoa's only two-time champs.

The Owens district is very good. Purdue is, of course, the centerpiece, but there are two other jewels. Hughes was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the 171# district last year behind Purdue and Reed. At States he lost in the first round to Klaus and then came back to win five consolation bouts and finish 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year he is undefeated (at least until Saturday when he wrestles Purdue who beat him 20-4) and won three tournaments. The other star is Brock Kirian who was 4<sup>th</sup> at this weight class as a sophomore. He has not yet wrestled this year, as far as I know, but apparently may do so before season's end. If healthy he will be outstanding. There are no obvious choices for the one or two qualifying spots that are left. McClory, White and Cheesman are possibilities with Endicott and Storm Evans also in the mix.

There is more depth at Maple Heights. There are three returning state qualifiers, but I think the best boy who won only a single district bout last at 152#. Jared Neff has gotten much bigger and fiercer and the results show he pinned Nester and Caleb Kennedy at Richmond Hts. then beat Steigerwald for the title. At the Dies he had a succession of lopsided wins before losing to excellent Pushpak in the finals 9-6. Just as good is state placer Travis Porter who has won at Solon, Kenston, and Chardon. He moved up and pinned McElligott at the Ohio Duals. Kirian beat him by one point last year. Steigerwald has had another solid year. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Richmond Hts. and Lorain Southview and has placement potential. That leaves state qualifier Gault and Nester fighting for the last spot with Hannum and Martter, if he wrestles, very close behind. A long-shot here might be Viola or Ewing.

Cummins was 7<sup>th</sup> last year and that included a pin of Porter. He won at the Gorman pinning Hudak in the finals. He and Porter won't be wrestling for 7<sup>th</sup> this year. Ball was also 7<sup>th</sup> – clearly a lucky weight class at this district – but losing big to Purdue and to Hughes. He won at Licking Hts. and Shadyside and should place again. Wasserbeck didn't place 7<sup>th</sup>, but he did win a bout at the State after winning the district title, 7-6, over Cummins. This is a strong trio, but as at Maple Hts. there is no obvious fourth qualifier. Zang placed at the CIT and would appear to have the inside track with Bowers a good second choice.

There is not nearly as much power at Fairmont. Michael is the only returning state qualifier and he went 1-2 missing placement by a point. McGillvary is probably a good second choice with Miller and Oliver happy they're at this district. Caudill, Homan and Rupert can also have realistic state-aspirations. I wouldn't be surprised to see a stray 171-pounder move in this direction.

## 215 #

### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: NICK HOOPER (MANCHESTER)**

#### Top Contenders

2	Hunt (Calvert)	15	Bayly (Toledo Christian)
3	Hershey (West Salem Northwestern)	16	Swain (Carlisle)
4	Albanese (Fairbanks)	17	Mahl (Seneca East)
5	Rhodes (Garrettsville Garfield)	18	Gord (Dayton Christian)
6	Bostleman (Archbold)	19	Clawson (Jackson Milton)
7	Jefferis (Barnesville)	20	Albright (Indian Valley)
8	Hesson (Caldwell)	21	Wagner (Triad)
9	Johnson (Utica)	22	Cox (Collins Western Reserve)
10	Johnson (Purcell)	23	Stewart (Brooklyn)
11	McElligott (Chanel)	24	Allen (Kirtland)
12	Buckner (Woodmore)	25	Habig (Bellaire St. John)
13	McKibben (Northwood)	26	Uhlenhake (Coldwater)
14	Swick (Delphos Jefferson)	27	Smith (Blanchester)
		28	Running (Clinton Massie)

If you go on the Internet and hit the Google website and punch in “wide open competition” I’m guessing you’ll find the Division III 215-pound bracket. It’s one of the weight classes where no one wrestler or group of wrestlers catches your eye as a potential state champ. Now don’t get me wrong, there are some good wrestlers here, it’s just that each one has a significant hurdle to clear to win it all.

I think the best district is at Maple Heights. Hooper has been terrific winning over Albanese at Richmond Hts., beating Rhodes by two at Wadsworth, and finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> to D-I, Cogar, at the Dies. He was a state qualifier at heavyweight last year and made it to the State semi-finals before losing to two-time champ Cameron Wade. Now I’ve seen heavyweights drop to 215# and struggle because they can’t handle the quickness. That should not bother Hooper. Hershey is the defending champ at this district, but he went home winless dropping a pair of three-point decisions. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Gorman this year losing to the mighty Clum, but beating the excellent Houska in the semi-finals. Rhodes was one bout from qualification last year and is a good third choice at this district. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Wadsworth and first at Aurora. McElligott and Clawson are contenders for that fourth berth, but don’t forget about Stewart and Allen. Stewart, in particular, has registered some impressive wins.

Hunt was 4<sup>th</sup> at this weight class last year, and has had a brilliant 2007 campaign. He did not dominate last year. His three state wins were 3-2, 3-2, 2OT and 2-1, 2OT. I think he recognized that he was good enough to get much more offensive and that is what has happened this year. He won at Van Buren for example with a final round 13-3 decision. His only loss was a first period fall to Srock in the CIT finals. Next best I think is Bostleman who should qualify, possibly as a district finalist. The next group is closely bunched with state alternate Mahl, Buckner, McKibben, and Bayly all possible candidates. Add to that group Cox and Aurand (Elmwood) and it will be bracketing, health, and breaks that will decide. I’m looking for the steady McKibben to qualify with, perhaps, the powerful Buckner as the last choice.

I think there are six state quality candidates for four spots at Heath. Three have already tasted state action with little or no success. I think state qualifier Albanese might lead the pack. As mentioned, he was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Richmond Hts. and 1<sup>st</sup> at Alder. Right behind him is Jefferis who Albanese beat to go to State. This year he is 29-1 and won four tournaments including the OVAC and his only loss was to Hesson at Barnesville. State qualifier Hesson is next with a 3<sup>rd</sup> at the OVAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> at Barnesville, and two tournament titles. Now comes the complication. Johnson was a state qualifier at heavyweight, but, like Hooper, has moved to 215#. How he’ll fare at this weight class is uncertain. Then come Habig and Albright (winner at Coshocton and Union Local) who need a break to qualify.

Fairmont is not a strong district. I think Johnson, now 23-1, is probably the top candidate to win this competition with wins over both state qualifiers Swain and Swick. He has moved up from 189# and done so with great success. Both of the last named boys are in line for qualification as well. Swick, in particular, has had good wins,

including Allen County and Plymouth – where he pinned Mahl. I've not seen any score from state qualifiers Gord, but if here, he could be effective. If not, look for Wagner, Running and Smith as possible qualifiers.

### 285#

#### **PROJECTED CHAMPION: CAMERON WADE (CHANEL)**

##### Top Contenders

2	Campbell (Black River)	15	Gregory (New London)
3	Salyers (Mechanicsburg)	16	Osborn (Licking Hts.)
4	Read (West Salem Northwestern)	17	Smith (Utica)
5	Tahy (Elmwood)	18	Pleiss (Warren JFK)
6	Rankin (Elyria Catholic)	19	Edington (Pleasant)
7	Bruce (Bellaire)	20	Zang (Hartley)
8	Southwick (Otsego)	21	Cline (Ayersville)
9	Fritz (Delphos St. John)	22	Schwochow (Brookville)
10	Mulcahy (Liberty Union)	23	Stover (Calvert)
11	Hale (Preble Shawnee)	24	Paden (Martins Ferry)
12	Hassett (Carlisle)	25	Grieshop (Coldwater)
13	Steward (Crestview)	26	Murray (Norwayne)
14	Stocum (Kirtland)	27	Hughes (Wellington)

Until three years ago no heavyweight wrestler had ever won three state titles. Then Koel Davia from Union Local broke a 65 year drought by taking three Division III championships. The next year sophomore Cameron Wade won at this weight and now he can duplicate Davia's feat after taking his second title last year. It's kind of strange that these two streaks could happen back-to-back, but one of the charms of high school wrestling is the unexpected.

This is a banner year for heavyweights in Ohio, but I think Wade might be the best. He has twice won at Brecksville and has made a habit of beating heavyweights from the bigger schools. He pinned Nicolozakes, beat Becker, Hartshorn and Stolarsky, and that's just this year. Ironically, despite owning two state titles he has never won a district title. For the past two years the highly under-rated Jesse Campbell has beaten him there – the first time on a fall. However, once in Columbus Wade has been invincible, last year beating Campbell in the finals 5-3. Campbell does not wrestle the same high-profile schedule as Wade, but I noted that he pinned Toledo's best, Chris Holland, in little more than a minute.

Campbell won't be Wade's only obstacle. The experienced Adam Salyers' 5<sup>th</sup> last year, is also back. He pinned state runner-up Cody Ruffer at last year's States and his only two losses were in overtime, one in the semi-finals to Campbell. He gets pinned once or twice a year, Edington most recently, but he cannot be overlooked.

As good as Wade and Campbell are, they are not safe at Maple Heights. State qualifier Read also returns and he suffered a pair of 3-point losses at States. Read was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Gorman losing, 2-1, to Campbell and pinned Stocum at the Husky Duals. State alternate Rankin is also excellent. He won at Elyria Catholic and was 3<sup>rd</sup> at the CIT losing only to Division I star Frank Becker. All four qualifiers could place. Pleiss, 5<sup>th</sup> at CIT and Stocum are also here but need a break or two to qualify. This is just a great district.

Salyers is alone at Fairmont. He ran through that district last year and it's pretty much the same group again. District runner-up Hale is back and could be a finalist if he draws away from Salyers. He is 22-2 at this time. Hassett was also a state qualifier (and won a bout) returns for Carlisle. He lost to Hale in the regular 8-6 in overtime so they're close. He was 4<sup>th</sup> at the GMVWA and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Troy Christian. Fritz lost in overtime in his go-to-state bout to Hassett and hopefully will be on the other side of that bracket this year. He won at Allen County and Van Buren (over Tahy), but was pinned by Rankin at Elyria Catholic. He may have moved ahead of Hassett and Hale. Schwochow could qualify as he got deep into the districts last year and placed at GMVWA this season. Grieshop is a long shot here.

The big redhead state qualifier Tahy is probably the best of a rather weak Owens District heavyweight class. He was 2<sup>nd</sup> at Van Buren and 4<sup>th</sup> at St. John, but has had consistent dual meet success. Southwick, I think, is second best. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Tiffin and an impressive 1<sup>st</sup> at Sylvania Southview over Urban. Steward, 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Gorman, also gets the nod for qualification. He has been good all year. Gregory is next in line with wins at Plymouth and Woodmore. Cline and Stover are other possibilities, but having the weekend of your life could pay off for a lot of heavyweights at this district.

Only Bruce has state credentials at Heath. He went two and out, but took Hassett into overtime. He is currently 23-3 with a 4<sup>th</sup> at the OVAC, won at Shadyside, and was 2<sup>nd</sup> to Diagosta at Beaver Local. State alternate Mulcahy is probably second best winning, for example, at Licking Hts. He beat Osborn 7-5 there, cementing his hold as the Division III heavyweight in the Central District. Smith and Edington are right there as well with Zang and, maybe, Paden. Nobody here can sleep without fear when they consider their qualification chances.

## TEAMS

1. Pleasant On a formula basis this showdown between Pleasant and Troy Christian is about as close as you can get. Both teams have seven primary scorers who should generate somewhere around 130 points. For Pleasant that mandates good performances from Pope, Davis, Moore, Wilson, Adams, and the two Reynolds. Their edge is that they also have potential scorers like Coomes, McCoy, and Bowers to collect a few vital points—if they can get to States. If both teams wrestle to their potential a key weight might be 145# where Davis and Burns may meet for the third time.
2. Troy Christian The surprise team of 2006 will not sneak up on anybody this year. Like Pleasant they, too, have seven principal weapons—Sergent, Hancock, Toal, Burns, Campbell, and the Thomes. There is not much peripheral help, but that top group could well outscore Pleasant if they hit on all cylinders. The Division III team record is 149.5 points set in 1998 by Delta—both of these powerhouse teams have an outside chance of surpassing it. They need Hancock, Toal (at that brutal 140# weight class), and Burns to be at their absolute best.
3. Chanel This team is a perennial Division III threat but they do not have the firepower this year to match the top duo. Still, if Boing and Wade win as projected and Gardella, Schafer and Hayes place they could score close to 100 points—more than enough to win in many years. Extra help from McElligott and Kovach would help guarantee third place.
4. Sandusky St. Mary It shapes up as another “rock ‘em, sock ‘em” battle between Chanel and St. Mary like so many in the past—but this time it will be for third place. St. Mary has won five consecutive state titles and six of the last seven, but their Big Four will not be enough this year. Opfer and Harrington are favorites at 112# and 119# and Hermes and Ortolani should score heavily, but there is no other help. Jude Roth leaves St. Mary with eight state titles—seven team trophies and one individual title he won in 1978. He has coached more Division III team champions than any coach in Ohio history.

5. Berkshire A team with the most upside of any team below the dominant four just reviewed. Jenkins, Thoreson, Richardson and the two Porters can all score at the state level. The question is how much? They certainly could reach the Top Five with a total team effort.
6. Mechanicsburg They have a lot of options, but this is also a team that needs to show that they can score as a group at the State level. Salyers, Toney and Klaus could score heavily with the Zieglers as potential augmenters. They have a shot at 5<sup>th</sup> place.
7. Genoa Two finalists including one reasonably sure champion generates a lot of points. They have a lot of rather dim possibilities, but after the dominant foursome teams scoring is likely to be very fragmented. That means only one extra wrestler—Wagner, Espinoza, Travers, Vogepohl –needs to step up
8. Brookfield The linchpins of this team are Thompson and Tice and both could be finalists. Harnett could help, but they have little room for error.
9. Northmor This is a team that could be 5<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup>. The question is whether they are a team that can only score at the district level or can they score at Columbus. They have a lot of possibilities and a lot of experience. But it has to translate at the State level. Zolman, Howe, Neer, and the Galliks are all on the periphery of placement, but can they get it done?
10. West Jefferson There are no champs here, but Householder and Lawler could be finalists. Add in state qualifiers like Crispin, Gualtieri, and Inks and there is enough here to battle any team outside the fiercesome foursome.