

DIVISION I

103

PROJECTED CHAMPION: GUS SAKO (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Mines (Maple Hts.)	16	Kocol (West Carrollton)
3	Corrill (Moeller)	17	Hauser (Brush)
4	Hannan (Massillon Perry)	18	Caston (Sandusky)
5	Chorney (Solon)	19	Higgins (Central Crossing)
6	Toth (Riverside)	20	Terry (Butler)
7	Boehm (Watkins Memorial)	21	Nein (Reynoldsburg)
8	Manley (Holland Springfield)	22	Gray (Wadsworth)
9	Ague (Fitch)	23	Garcia (Clay)
10	Wright (Lima Sr.)	24	Schultz (Elder)
11	Ralston (Lorain Southview)	25	Keeling (St. Xavier)
12	Pasquale (Boardman)	26	Slater (Olmsted Falls)
13	Schilling (Edgewood)	27	Young (Mentor)
14	DiSabato (Davidson)	28	Boyd (Marion Franklin)
15	Artrip (Mason)	29	Mauro (Centerville)

If we were in the odds making industry one would have to say that Sako is probably the strongest favorite we've had at this weight class in Division I since the days of Kyle Ott. A junior high state champ and a Cadet Nationals place winner he has tremendous ability and experience. He was 4th at the Ironman losing one-point decisions to Stieber and DiJulius and 1st at the MIT—beating Toth in the finals 11-1, the closest of his five bouts. He beat Corrill 7-0 at the Ohio Duals and has only one other loss--to the pesky DiJulius, 1-0. Absent injury or other misfortune he should win relatively easily.

Sako exits a good district, and one with some interesting questions. Manley was very impressive at last year's district winning three bouts and finishing as the state alternate. Clark beat him badly in the semi-finals, but that was no disgrace. When I saw that he was back at 103# I saw immediate competition for Sako. It hasn't happened --yet. He was 8th at the MIT -- losing three times including by fall to Hauser. At Perrysburg he wrestled Cramer in the final and suffered a tough overtime defeat. I still think he can be a real force at this weight class. Jevon Wright had a 6th at last year's district losing twice to Manley. He is a prodigious scorer with speed and strength. This year he has struggled with the weight and injuries, but when healthy he can be very good. He won on technical fall against the excellent Hunlock (at 112#) and was 1st at Lima. He is an upset threat - - and, maybe, much more. Ralston has won four tournaments (Darby, Waite, Southview and Fremont Ross) and has shown the consistency that others have lacked. I wait to see him against the real tough guys. Garcia and Caston have been steady placers, but how they fit in might depend on how forceful Manley and Wright are. Slater, runner-up at the Dies, also has good chances here.

Corrill heads the group at Fairfield. He won the SWOCA in dominating fashion and was even more dominant at the CIT--except for a first round scare. In the last three rounds he won 16-4, 13-2, and 15-4. He did not place at the Ironman and his only loss since then was a 7-0 shutout to Sako at the Ohio Duals. I think there is a substantial gap between Corrill and the rest of the Cincinnati – Dayton boys. There are two sets of four to consider. In the southern part of the district Artrip, Schultz, Keeling and Mauro serve as contenders. Schultz and Keeling have met in the consolation finals at both the CIT and SWOCA--splitting the two bouts, but neither placed at Brecksville. Artrip, 5th at the SWOCA won at Mason and Dublin while Mauro was 1st at Fairfield. The second quartet is in the Dayton area and could compete either at Darby or Fairfield. As you recall, the two Dayton sectionals select from the area schools--one section heading north and the other south. We won't know who goes where until after this report is completed. In most cases I assign wrestlers to one or the other districts strictly based on my own guesses. It likely is a poor match for the eventual reality. At any rate that second quartet consists of Terry, Schilling, Kocol and Williamson. Of this group only Kocol has past district experience winning two bouts at Darby last year. He won at Wapakoneta, but was 2nd at Edgewood to Schilling by fall. Schilling may be the front-runner here, but has not wrestled a demanding schedule. Also look for Terry who was 2nd at the GMVWA.

Depending on the Southwest District split Darby could be very crowded. Boehm was a Division II state qualifier last year, but drew state runner-up Inghram in the first round and failed to place. He was 1st at Hamilton Twp. and has been a consistent winner all year. He was 7th at the MIT - - losing to Hannan and Mirman, but defeating Manley. The young DiSabato was a junior high state place winner last year and has done well at Davidson. He was 8th at Brecksville in a very tough weight class - - losing by a single point to state place winner Dakota Hayes in the third round and Ague. He had wins over Young, Schultz, and Tschantz. The active Higgins and Nein seem next best with a steady placement history. Boyd winner at Licking Hts. and Bishop Ready should not be overlooked.

In a decision that would seem to defy common sense and logic the powers that be have made the Perry District--clearly the most difficult in recent years (see chart)--even tougher. By switching around the sectional placements they have made sure that wrestlers who clearly deserve state qualification will be disappointed, while those with far less credentials are gerrymandered in. This is particularly true up through 152# where the Perry District is loaded with top talent. At this class there are at least six very solid, state-worthy wrestlers. Mines--transferred over from what was the Mentor District last year--where he was the district runner-up at this weight class. At Columbus he lost to White in the quarterfinals and ended up 6th. This year he has compiled a 22-1 record with 1st at Kenston and a 2nd at Hudson to the hard charging Mitch. Pasquale is also a returning state placer who twice lost by a point to Farber at the state level. This year he was 2nd to Mines at Kenston (losing 12-4), but did not place at the Top Gun. Last year he beat Ague to get to Columbus and may have to do so again. Chorney has won at Solon and North Coast and has past district experience. He looked very good at Solon.

The surprise here, however, is the hard charging Hannan. It's amazing the great run of 103's at Massillon Perry in the last decade or so--Smith, McBurney, Vickers, Hartley, Riggs, Johnston, Genetin and White--all placers and many state champs. Hannan is no exception. He won the Big 8 and was 4th at the MIT losing to Sako in the semi-finals. Toth was 2nd at the MIT and won at Riverside. He was 3rd at the Top Gun splitting two bouts with Brascetta and beating Pasquale 8-2. Ague was one bout from States last year while Hauser, Zingale, Young and Gray are all very good. I'm thinking Mines, Hannan, and Chorney are the front-runners with Toth and Ague close behind. Then Pasquale and the others need to pull a couple of upsets to qualify. It will be a topsy-turvy struggle at Perry.

112

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SAM WHITE (MASSILLON PERRY)

Top Contenders

2	Clark (St. Edward)	14	Belcher (Marysville)
3	Mitcheff (Elyria)	15	Gray (Wadsworth)
4	Robinson (St. Ignatius)	16	Dempsey (Westlake)
5	Herrington (Sycamore)	17	Gerberick (Lakota West)
6	Farber (St. Xavier)	18	Polley (Maple Hts.)
7	Bolger (Strongsville)	19	Marsico (Pickerington North)
8	Millar (Davidson)	20	Regan (Miamensburg)
9	Riegle (Springboro)	21	Wimer (Central Crossing)
10	Conn (Teays Valley)	22	McNulty (Mayfield)
11	Zupancic (Barberton)	23	MacVeigh (Moeller)
12	Inchaurregui (Lorain Southview)	24	Gonzalez (Mason)
13	McSorley (Edgewood)	25	Kunzi (Watkins Memorial)

The top four at this weight class are light years ahead of the rest of a good field. They are all tremendous and have great credentials both in youth wrestling (Junior High States Cadet Nationals, etc.) and at the high school level. Three of the four exit at the same district that may well require careful scrutiny by the seeding system. It is conceivable, even somewhat probable, that White would have to beat all three of them to become a repeat champion. Should White and Clark win their respective districts (with Mitcheff and Robinson 2nd and 3rd at Harding) - then that scenario arises.

I'm choosing White, not only because he is a superb wrestler, but by March he will be the biggest of the quartet. He'll be most vulnerable early when weight control is still critical which is why the pairing may be so difficult for him. White has also improved - - especially offensively--and maintains a great defense. I know Clark beat him at Medina --and soundly--but these boys know each other so well (they've trained together for many years) that the next meeting could have a very different outcome. And we have no assurance that it will be Clark versus White. Robinson came about as close to

winning as possible losing to Clark in last year's quarterfinals while Mitcheff has won a state title.

White lost two bouts the first week of last year and then won the last 41 in a run including two over Clark. They were uncannily similar with Clark always the aggressor and White playing defense. I frankly found it unbelievable that they had equal stalling calls in the state final--even more so when you review the DVD. This year White lost in the Ironman finals to Stieber and to Clark at the MIT. He is better than last year and that should bring no comfort to his opposition.

Clark has been brilliant again this year. Only a loss to the incomparable Taylor has kept him from perfection. Better on his feet than White he has to contend with a bigger White come States. An indication of this quartet's dominance was Clark's bout with the very fine wrestler and district champ Zac Conn at the Ohio Duals which Clark won 17-2. Should the bracketing put Clark, alone, in one side of the bracket, it would be a huge plus for him.

Robinson was 3rd last year with five crushing state wins and the controversial loss to Clark. He has been injured virtually the entire season so we have yet to see him at his best. However, if he is healthy he can beat anyone here. Mitcheff was the 103# state champ two years ago - - beating Ciccarello, Touris and Genetin in order. Last year he was a state semi-finalist losing this time to Touris in one of those extended bouts 3-2 otu. This year he was a semi-finalist at the Ironman losing to Clark and finishing 4th and was 3rd at Brecksville losing to Tessari and beating Robinson.

With Clark, Mitcheff and Robinson at Harding, there is very little margin for error at Harding with the bracket gods likely in ascendancy. Connor Dempsey and Narcisco Inchaurregui are two young wrestlers that have really been outstanding with the latter boy, for example, winning three tournaments and placing 2nd in another.

White stands alone at Perry. Bolger, very likely the second best, was just overwhelmed by White at the Big 8 losing by fall in the second period. However, Bolger won at Solon and was 5th at Brecksville losing to state runner-up Inghram and Robinson. The only other district placer at this district is Zupancic, down from 119#, who was 6th. He was 3rd at the Dies and 7th at the MIT and has good qualification chances. After that I'm thinking about Gray, Polley, or the exciting freshman McNulty. It'll be wide open for the fourth state berth with Zupancic certainly not guaranteed the third.

After the top quartet, the best 112-pounder in the state has probably been Herrington. Undefeated he has won at Sycamore, Fairfield and the SWOCA and he has been winning by large margins. Only Farber, for example, gave him a match at the SWOCA. He failed to get out of sectionals last year at 119#, but it has been a totally different story this year. State qualifier Riegler was second at Fairfield to Herrington and 2nd at the GMVWA to Taylor. He went 1-2 at States last year and seems ready to place. Farber did place at 103# getting a 7th after winning this district at 103#. He was a recent 1st at the CIT and a strong 3rd at the SWOCA giving Herrington a good bout (5-3). He

did not wrestle at Brecksville. This is a very good trio of leaving state qualifier Gerberick little margin for error. He failed to place at the SWOCA or Brecksville and depending on the direction of some of the Dayton wrestlers could be in jeopardy of staying home. Gonzalez and MacVeigh are two other names that come to mind.

There are a lot of possibilities at Darby. I count, under my dispersal system, three returning state qualifiers at this district. They were a combined 2-6 at the state meet, but the experience should make for improvements this year. Millar has been very successful the past couple years winning steadily in both tournaments and dual meets. The big tournament on his schedule was Brecksville where he finished 7th. His two losses were to Robinson and Mitcheff. Conn was the district champ at this class and had a tough early draw losing to Mitcheff and Hillock. He was 1st at Darby and St. Clairsville. State qualifier McSorley was 1st at Edgewood and 2nd at Darby this year. He'll be pushed by a bevy of good 112's. Regan was 3rd at the GMVWA losing only to Taylor. He won two district bouts last year beating Marsico, but losing badly to Millar. Belcher and Marsico have both been steady placers with the later winning at both Wapakoneta and St. X. That leaves Wimer, Kunzi, and maybe, Seiple (Coffman) with a difficult path to qualification.

119

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KYLE CICCARELLO (BRUSH)

Top Contenders

2	Fuller (Waite)	14	Comar (Twinsburg)
3	Henry (Solon)	15	Bivenour (Olentangy)
4	Shepherd (Mason)	16	Cobos (St. Edward)
5	Lawrence (Westlake)	17	Campbell (Anderson)
6	Hillock (Massillon Perry)	18	K. Leedy (Start)
7	Shivener (Springboro)	19	Lardiere (St. Charles)
8	Wallander (Moeller)	20	Speelman (Mansfield Madison)
9	Marks (Brecksville)	21	Davis (Lakota West)
10	Roeth (Miamsburg)	22	Jones (Beavercreek)
11	McCombs (Marysville)	23	Gyorfi (Lorain Southview)
12	Bencivenni (Eastlake North)	24	Flores (Fremont Ross)
13	Stoll (Coffman)	25	Smith (Mt. Vernon)

Every year there seems to be one weight class in Division I that seems clearly less strong than the others. A weight class where opportunity flows in wide streams, and state placement and state titles seem somewhat more attainable. It's not that there aren't any number of excellent wrestlers competing, but somehow there is a different "feel" to the weight class. Last year I felt it at 130# and the previous year at 152#. The problem at most weight classes is that there are too many candidates for Valhalla, at weight classes like this there never seems to be enough. Ironically an almost sure winner here, Sammy White, has for team considerations made the tough cut to 112#. It

gets Hillock in the lineup, but it, in my mind, reduces his title probability on the order of 30%.

In the end it would seem to come down to a three-way struggle featuring Ciccarello, Henry and Fuller, but if that's the case, then there is a reasonable chance of a surprise winner--an excellent freshman, somebody enjoying the competitive weekend of his life, or a good wrestler who, defying the odds, gets every break. Ciccarello was 5th two years ago and got trapped in that ridiculously difficult bottom half of the 112# draw last year. This year he was 2nd at Waite and Medina and 1st at North Canton. His two losses were to Fuller and state champion Garbrandt in overtime.

Henry was 5th at 119# last year--losing to Fields in overtime--and to Pretty in the consolations. This year he was 1st at Solon and 2nd at North Coast to Lawrence. Fuller wrestled extremely well last year at this class. He was the district champ--beating McLaughlin in the finals. He was then a state semi-finalist at Columbus beating Dukes and state runner-up Rini (8-1). Fields beat him by three in the semis but Fuller pinned Harger before losing to Pretty and finishing 5th. Those two state losses were double what he had the rest of the year. He was 1st at Waite beating Ciccarello, 5-2, but only 7th at Brecksville.

So, it's "by guess and by golly" time. Since Ciccarello and Henry are both at Perry, Fuller would likely have to beat them both. I think he matches up better with Ciccarello than the tall, slender, Henry, but it's a big order to win both. Henry, I believe, will also be the bigger boy on Saturday night if he can get there, but I don't think he matches up well with Ciccarello. Thus if A beats B and B beat C and C beat A who do you chose, I'm going with C for Ciccarello.

Ciccarello and Henry emerge from the same district and that squeezes the rest of the competition. There may be three other state qualifiers at this venue. Marks wrestled brilliantly at last year's districts at 125# unexpectedly making the finals before losing to Horner. He maintained that momentum at Columbus beating Krummert in the first round and losing in overtime to McGuire. Dinda stopped him in the consolation and he finished 8th. He has now dropped to 119# (he sees the opportunity) and after wrestling at 125# much of year. He was a semi-finalist at Brecksville before being pinned by Pretty and losing a one pointer to Chapman. In his first event at 119# he was 5th at the Dies losing to Gilchrist and Ford. Bencivenni was a district 3rd at this class last year, but got Harger in the first round and failed to place. Not in many large tournaments he continues to forge good results in duals. However, his 6th place finish at Solon (admittedly early in the year) was not encouraging. Twinsburg will either put state qualifier Kretz or the exciting Comar, on the mat and either is a threat. A key figure is Hillock. Wrestling for Massillon Jackson last year he grabbed the last district qualifying spot, and won two state bouts and finishing 8th (losing to current teammate Genetin for 7th). Now in at 119th he was 7th at Medina losing in overtime to Stoll and was 2nd at the Big 8 to Kovach. He went 2-1 at the state duals beating Wallander. Wenger (Wadsworth) or Montoney (Stow) are long shots here.

If anyone is going to challenge the Perry District qualifiers it could come from Fairfield. On paper Wallander would seem best. At 125# last year (like Marks) he wrestled a great district, after coming in with a 13-14 record, reaching the finals--tough schedules can pay off. At States he beat Moore, Channel and Marks to finish 7th. This year he was 2nd at the SWOCA and 3rd at the CIT losing to Martin of Watterson. At the Ohio Duals he beat Cobos and lost to Hillock. He should place again. The two wrestlers to watch are Shepherd and Shivener. Last year, as a freshman, he pulled off one of the shocking upsets at Columbus beating Genetin 10-8 in overtime. It was the high water mark since he lost the next three to finish 6th, but he showed his capability. This year he won at St. X and Mason and was 3rd at the SWOCA losing to the young Carpenter. If he gets on a hot streak he'll be tough to stop. Shivener is that "scary good" kind of freshman able to beat anyone. He was the junior high state champ last year, and has been very good this year. He won at Fairfield and was 2nd to Neibert at the GMVWA while pinning Roeth. Watch out! Roeth is a solid choice for Columbus. He was a state alternate at this weight class. This year he was 2nd at North Canton and 3rd at GMVWA. The freshman Ty Davis is another fine wrestler who could score big at this weight class. There are three other possibilities. Campbell has won at Edgewood and Marion Harding and was 2nd at Fairfield while Weiskettel (Sycamore) won at Sycamore, Trauth (St. Xavier) might be the long shot here.

The Darby District has a group of solid 119's. McCombs was 1st at Wapakoneta and 5th at Brecksville. He lost to Sergeant in the championship bracket, but had some solid consolation wins. He was, in fact, the highest placing Division I wrestler. A district finalist last year he drew Shepherd in the first round at States losing 11-7. Stoll is likely second best here. He has not been lucky in past years, but this should be his time. He lost two tough district bouts last year (3-1 to Roeth and 5-4 OT to Bivenour and didn't earn a second trip to States. This year he has been 1st at Upper Arlington and Coffman and 6th at the MIT--beating Hillock. State qualifier Bivenour lost to Henry by four in the first round and is also in his senior season. He was 2nd recently to Gyorf at the Hilliard Darby Tourney. I like Lardiere for the last spot with Jones and, maybe, Gorman runner-up Smith as possibilities. Jordan is another thought.

Fuller leads the pack at Harding, but it's a tenuous hold. Lawrence was a state semi-finalist before losing to White and Robinson and finishing 5th. He is an exceptional wrestler who is the only in-state wrestler to beat Henry this year—at the North Coast Tourney. Cobos was a state qualifier but has not thrived since then. Still this is not the toughest weight class in the world and if he is truly healthy he has a shot. Speelman and Flores have won some big tournaments while Leedy is always a threat. He was 3rd at Waite over Gyorf (but lost to Fuller 11-0). Gyorf is the wild card; he won at Darby and was 2nd at Southview. He can beat anyone here but Fuller and Lawrence.

125 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM PRETTY (ELDER)

Top Contenders

2	Harger (Moeller)	14	Inchaurregui (Lorain Southview)
3	Genetin (Massillon Perry)	15	Moore (Beavercreek)
4	Mattingly (Uniontown Lake)	16	Vanderhoff (Marion Harding)
5	Chapman (Kenmore)	17	Hill (Mt. Vernon)
6	Dinda (Garfield Hts.)	18	Sherman (Milford)
7	Salupo (St. Edward)	19	Stemen (Teays Valley)
8	Sanders (Central Crossing)	20	B. Leedy (Start)
9	Fayette (Centerville)	21	Dalton (Barberton)
10	Foore (Wadsworth)	22	Kreacic (Lakota West)
11	Varga (Olmsted Falls)	23	Duccilli (Olentangy)
12	Few (Reynoldsburg)	24	Welsh (Stow)
13	Giffin (Harrison)	25	King (Madison)

The last eight years has seen a wrestler from the Northeast District take the title at this weight class. It is the longest such streak for one district at any of the 42 weight classes. .Next closest is the Northeast streak at 215# that currently stands at seven. There is a good chance that a wrestler from Elder will stop each of those streaks.

This looks to be a four-way battle for the top spot with enough quality people behind this quartet to insure competitive bouts and the occasional upset. The best four are distributed evenly over two sectionals so that the pairings should be good. Two are seniors and all have state placement credentials.

The wrestler on a roll right now is Harger. In the last couple of weeks he has beaten both Genetin and Pretty while winning the CIT and sweeping the Ohio Duals. He had lost to Pretty earlier at the SWOCA and failed to place at the Ironman. Only a sophomore he appears to be gaining confidence and momentum. Last year he was 6th at 119# again getting better as the year progressed.

Pretty is a two-time state qualifier who caught fire last year. He beat Fields to win the SWOCA and made it to the state semi-finals before losing to Squire and finishing 3rd. This year he was awesome at Brecksville – six falls as he won both it and the SWOCA. However, Genetin pinned him at the Ohio Duals and he lost in the CIT finals after an overtime struggle against the excellent Vaughan.

Genetin was a state runner-up at 103# two years ago losing in overtime to Mitcheff. Last year, at that extremely tough 112# class, he pinned his way through the district (and that included Mattingly in the final), and got a super pairing. Then, inexplicably, in the quarter-finals he lost to Shepherd in overtime and then ran into a train named Lang in the consolations and finished 7th. He was a semi-finalist at the Ironman and was 3rd at the Ironman - - losing in overtime to Mattingly. He is, like Pretty, a wonderful pinner.

Mattingly is a never give-up grinder. He was 4th at that tough 112# weight class last year losing to Touris and Lang. This season he won at the MIT, but was 4th at North Canton losing to Chapman and Fayette. His big win this year was that victory over Genetin.

There is no seeding at this class but the pairings should be good. The top foursome is evenly split between two districts that should even out the pairings. The one issue is that dynamite district at Perry that could create some tough early round match-ups. Harger has been on a great run recently, but that will be difficult to sustain. He seems able to neutralize Genetin's scoring ability. Pretty was so dominant at Brecksville that you fail to remember that it was not an awesomely strong weight class. You could pick any of this top four and your odds are 30% of being correct. Well, if I could have hit at that rate I'd been in the big leagues, but in this arena it would be nice to do better. So, let's go with Pretty figuring early pins keep him well rested and fresh.

The best and deepest district is at Perry. It's headed by Genetin and Mattingly, but there is an amazing amount of firepower. Chapman was 1st at Solon and North Canton, 2nd at the Dies and 5th at Brecksville after losing on a defensive pin in the semi-finals. He is sort of the lead-off man for an extraordinary group of Kenmore wrestlers. This is a program that is developing a stable of stars--Chapman, McCormick, Lamberg, the Sheppards and so on--and has become completely revitalized in recent years. Also returning is Dinda who has been 5th the last two years and would set a record of sorts if it happens again. He starts each year about three weight classes above his final objective and gradually works his way to the desired point--and he does so winning in a consistent manner. I have him with over 140 career wins. He has lost in the first round of states the last two years and gone the consolation route. He will have to be at his very best just to get out of this district. Foore was 4th at 103# last year, but it's a big jump to 125#. He was 2nd at the Big 8 and Wadsworth. I like state qualifier Kretz, but he's probably a 119 – pounder while Welsh, King, and Dalton are all very good, but unlikely to qualify – at least at this district. Also strong is Gibbons who has looked very good. He won two district bouts last year, but it will be tough going here.

Harger and Pretty dominate the Fairfield District, but depending on the Dayton dispersal, it could get even tougher. State qualifier Fayette, now at Miamisburg, was 3rd at North Canton, upsetting Mattingly, but getting badly beaten by Chapman. He was also 3rd at GMVWA losing to Tucker Armstrong, but won handily at Sycamore. Giffin pulled the huge upset at the SWOCA beating Harger in the semi-finals. He was 2nd there and placed 3rd at Wadsworth losing to Foore. Add in Sherman and Kreacic and it's a rugged district.

It will be somewhat easier at Darby. Sanders is generally recognized as the best at this weight class at Darby. He was a state alternate at 130# last year losing two close bouts after reaching the district semi-finals. Now at 125# he beat Stemen to win at Franklin Hts., beat Foore to win at Wadsworth and swept through the field at Mason. He was 2-1 at the Ohio Duals, the only blemish a 9-0 loss to Pretty. Moore is a returning state

qualifier who drew Collin Palmer in the first round and bowed out with a loss to Wallander. Stemen was one bout from States last year and was 2nd at Franklin Hts. Sanders has beaten him twice, but he still has to be on the short list for qualification. However, Few, 1st at Waite in a representative weight class and 8th at Brecksville might have passed him. Hill might have a chance here, while state qualifier Duccilli needs to generate some positive momentum.

The weak district is at Harding. Nobody here has state experience and many have never reached the district level. Salupo, new to the varsity, had an inauspicious start to his career at the Ironman drawing state champion Garbrandt and the excellent Knotek immediately and going two and out. However, he bounced back at the MIT beating the #1 seed in the semi-finals and losing a two-point bout to Mattingly in the finals. He had to wrestle Harger and Pretty back-to-back at the Ohio Duals and it wasn't pretty, but again he showed good resilience in the next dual by beating Knotek. I'm not sure what to think about Guerra. At last year's district he looked dominating at times and missed qualification on a 10-7 loss to the excellent Ciccarello. I had high expectations for this year, but it has not happened. He was 2-2 at Brecksville and 1-2 in the Ohio Duals. Leedy (that's Bryce) was 1st at Northwood and 4th at Waite. He is up two-weight classes after going 2-2 at last year's district. A newcomer to watch is Inchaurregui (that's Zenon) who has won at Fremont Ross and Southview and was 3rd at Waite losing only to Few. That bout might have set a record for the largest difference in the number of last name letters. Vanderhoff and Varga are quality wrestlers who could well qualify. Varga started out great, had a couple of slip-ups and then poured it on recently. In such cases I suspect injury. If he is healthy he's top four here. Rodriguez is a long shot.

130

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRAD SQUIRE (WADSWORTH)

Top Contenders

2	Horner (Massillon Perry)	15	Hammer (Moeller)
3	Fields (Lakota West)	16	Frost (Upper Arlington)
4	Sulzer (St. Edward)	17	Palmer (Marion Franklin)
5	Parra (Barberton)	18	Simon (Maple Hts)
6	Weaver (Olentangy)	19	Newberry (Milford)
7	McCormick (Kenmore)	20	Morgan (Amherst)
8	Latham (Sylvania Southview)	21	Manno (Green)
9	Mezinger (Fremont Ross)	22	Myer (Butler)
10	Meyer (Elder)	23	Jacobs (Miamensburg)
11	D'Alessandro (Mayfield)	24	James (Teays Valley)
12	McHenry (Elyria)	25	Marler (West Carrollton)
13	Edwards (Central Crossing)	26	Yin (Mason)
14	Palmer (St. Ignatius)	27	Countryman (Marion Harding)

This is an absolutely fabulous weight class. There are five wrestlers who should be state finalists (three have already been there, the other two finished 3rd) and three of them come from one district. On top of that there are three more wrestlers that in a normal year would be in my top five choices. If you want to be a state champ going up is no treat with Collin Palmer there, so this bracket will be pulse pounding.

The district at Perry will be better--at least at the top--than many state brackets. Squire had an undefeated freshman year winning 34 consecutive bouts--after an early season injury. At the state meet he wrestled mistake free bouts with low scores and great defense. The combined scores of his four wins was 16-5. The final an overtime bout with Fields (more about that later) ended with a takedown--the only points in the bout. This year he extended his winning streak beating Horner at the Ironman, Latham at Wadsworth, and Hightower at North Canton. Finally, Horner, with two takedowns, ended the better than 50 match winning streak at the Mayfield Big 8 by 5-3. Horner, still just a junior, continues to get better. He has been 3rd in the state the last two years. But for an upset loss in the semi-final he would have battled Palmer in the state finals. He was, this year, 2nd at the Ironman and 1st at the MIT and Big 8. At the former he went into overtime to beat state runner-up Nick Sulzer after beating state 3rd, Parra, in the semi-finals. Parra was 3rd at States last year after reaching the state semi-finals. He beat Birt 11-4 for third. This year he was 3rd at the MIT--losing to Horner and beating Weaver--and 3rd at the Dies. Right with this group is the sophomore McCormick who won at the Dies and Solon and was 4th at Brecksville losing to Lazor (of Georgia) on a defensive pin and to Fields. He, too, was a state qualifier last year at 135#. These are four outstanding wrestlers--two are sophomores and two juniors. Right behind this quartet is state placer D'Alessandro who is going to reminisce about the good old days in Division III.

State runner-up Sulzer heads a crowded Harding District. As a freshman last year he utilized St. Ed's difficult schedule as a springboard to a district title over defending state champ Steve Mitcheff. That was critical because, in an unbalanced bracket, he was away from Touris, Mitcheff, Lang, Mattingly, and Ciccarello. When Genetin was upset he cruised in the finals outscoring his first three opponents 32-10. This year he is up three weight classes and it has not always been easy. He failed to place at the Ironman and lost 3-1 in overtime to Horner at the MIT final. Latham was a district runner-up at 125# last year and went 1-2 at States. He was 1st at Waite and 2nd at Wadsworth to Squire. He wrestles a lot of low scoring bouts. McHenry missed state qualification by a point last year after reaching the district semi-finals. He was 5th at Brecksville--losing a 7-6 quarterfinal bout to the eventual champion and an 8-6 struggle to McCormick. Like so many of Elyria's wrestlers he's trained to score. Palmer, this one from St. Ignatius is at about the same level. He was 2nd at the CIT in overtime and 6th at Brecksville losing to McHenry on tiebreaker. Mezinger is one to watch. He was a district 4th at 125# winning back-to-back 11-7 bouts (talk about lucky to qualify). This year he has won three tournaments and has never looked better. Behind this group I like Morgan and Countryman.

Fields stands out at Fairfield. He is a three-time state runner-up and I'm hoping he gets some lucky breaks this time. It's not that he has been 2nd to one-shot champs. I mean the losses have been to Jameson, Palmer, and Squire--all of whom could be four-time titleholders; last year had to be heartbreaking. Meaning absolutely no disrespect to Squire I thought Fields was the better wrestler that particular night. He attacked and attacked, took all the risks, but could not score thanks to Squire's inspired defense. Somehow I thought he "deserved" to win just because of his aggressiveness and energy, but it was not to be. This year he does not look the same. Yes, he won at the SWOCA, but not with his usual energy and he seemed almost listless against Vaughan at Brecksville where he was 3rd. He did win at Mason but it was by a single point over Weaver. There was some of that last year when Pretty beat him but he bounced back then and will I'm sure do so again. I think Meyer is next best after his state tournament run last year and a solid performance at the CIT where he had to forfeit the final. Looking more deeply Hammer and Newberry are next best with Yin and Williamson a possibility. Fields should be fresh for the rigors of the state after this district.

Like Fields, Weaver is way ahead of everybody else at his district. He was a state semi-finalist at this weight class before losing a 3-2 bout to Haas and dropping to 6th. The problem is that this weight class is light years harder than last year. He was 4th at the MIT losing to Sulzer and Parra, two very rugged competitors. He'll want to win this district and hope to get paired away from the Perry District in the first round. Edwards and Frost are probably next best, but that's fairly distant behind Weaver, with Marler and Palmer, this one from Marion Franklin, next in line. Jacobs, 1st at Sycamore, however might be better than this group, and James had a great district last year losing his go-to-state bout by a point.

There are five seedable wrestlers at this weight class--but three compete at one district --that leaves a number of possible configurations (for the so inclined I'll give the number at the end). Most likely scenario would have Squire on one side with Sulzer and Fields bracketed apart on the other side. If Horner and Parra were 2nd and 3rd at Perry it would leave us with four seedable wrestlers in one half bracket and only one in the other. There is certainly a rule that adjusts for this. At any rate winning the Perry District would be huge, increasing that wrestler's chances of winning the next week. As much as I hate to admit it defense may be the key attribute here, and if that is the case Squire will win. The Wadsworth coaching staff is, I'm sure, working out ways to negate Horner's leg attacks that led to his win. If Fields makes the finals, many will root for him hoping that no wrestler is a four-time runner-up. Sulzer kind of surprised all of us last year and that could happen again, but what a gauntlet he might have to run. Still, it might well come down to Horner versus Squire--like the Ironman, Big 8, and (probably) district -- one more time. Answer: 16.

135 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: COLLIN PALMER (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Speelman (Mansfield Madison)	16	May (Kenmore)
3	Mencini (Twinsburg)	17	Moore (Butler)
4	DiFabritus (Mason)	18	Rojas (Fremont Ross)
5	Gallagher (St. Xavier)	19	Languis (Scioto)
6	Grandominico (Olentangy)	20	Gordon (Wadsworth)
7	Cline (Uniontown Lake)	21	Funk (Nordonia)
8	Krummert (Milford)	22	Price (Massillon)
9	Channel (Central Crossing)	23	Dooley (Lakota West)
10	Liggitt (Boardman)	24	Fehring (Amelia)
11	Sasfy (Reynoldsburg)	25	Ganue (Clay)
12	Puskas (Mayfield)	26	Benedict (Canfield)
13	Drake (Upper Arlington)	27	Gyorfi (Lorain Southview)
14	Duffy (Lakewood)	28	Dietsch (Toledo St. Francis)
15	Lopez (Waite)		

Now a junior Palmer will be bidding for his third state title and will be an overwhelming favorite. He had not a single close bout on the tournament trail last year as he dominated every opponent. This year he is undefeated and that by rough reckoning makes his high school mark 95-2 with both losses to out of state wrestlers. . This year he won for the first time at the Ironman, but curiously did not seem himself on the mat. I kept wondering whether he was overcoming some type of lingering injury. He also won at Medina and his legend continues to grow. A three-time junior high state champ he now owns five state titles--in a tie with Sean Nemec, Cameron Doggett, Dustin Schlatter and David Taylor. The leaders are Lance Palmer and J. Jagers with six--a mark very likely to be tied by Collin and David this year. Of course, now that we have state titles down through elementary school some prodigy may get to double figures. If healthy, Palmer should win with few problems.

One of Palmer's chief rivals will be at Harding. Speelman has had an exceptional high school career. He has placed twice at the state level--including a 4th two years ago. This year he has been a whirlwind winning at North Canton, Tiffin, and the Gorman and collecting some OW awards. His big benefit is that he should be away from Palmer at States giving him a solid opportunity to make the finals--and then, who knows. Maybe, his best win this year was beating state runner-up Wukie, 10-2, in the North Canton finals. State qualifier Duffy wrestles a low profile schedule, but has undeniable talent. He has wins at Southview and Avon Lake. He was 8th last year in Columbus, and any placement in this difficult year would be very good. The great unknown is Lopez. He has had trouble staying at this weight, and that can often impact performance. He was a district champ at this weight last year defeating Gasber 15-10, he then lost to state runner-up Clopton in the first round at States and failed to place. He was at 140# at

Brecksville and went 1-2 losing to Riedy and Hurley. At Toledo Waite he lost to Price in the semi-finals and finished 3rd, expect more of him by sectional time. The 135 – pounder who has made great strides is Rojas. I saw him last year and he looked like a tough, physical kid. This year he has been 1st at Lima, Fremont Ross, and Perrysburg and 2nd at Tiffin (to Speelman, 5-2). He looks very ready. Add Ganue and, maybe, Dietsch and it's a solid district.

As always, Perry is loaded. It's time for Mencini to make his mark. He was a freshman star and yet, now as a senior he still has not placed. Last year he was at 140#, a great strategic move, and ended up 2nd at the district--losing to Willis 8-7 in the finals. That was a mistake because it got him state champion Lindsey in the quarterfinals, a 19-10 loss, and an early exit once again. This time he should win the district after titles at Solon and the Dies and a 3rd at Brecksville where he lost only to Thome. State qualifiers Liggitt and Puskas, return, but there are no guarantees here. Puskas has been runner-up at Mayfield and Kenston. Liggitt has been at 140# much of the year, but dropped recently. He was 1st at Kenston and 5th at the Top Gun losing to Wukie. Cline was 3rd at North Canton after being shut out by Speelman and 2nd to Palmer at the MIT. May has come on strong lately with runner-up finishes at Solon and the Dies both times losing to Mencini. He did not fare nearly as well at Brecksville losing early to Sasfy. I like the athletic Gordon - - only a sophomore - - from Wadsworth. He could be upset maker, but probably not a qualifier. Other possibilities are Brennan, Hodge, Benedict, and Funk.

The Darby District traditionally scores worst on most measures of achievement, but they will do well here. There are three returning state qualifiers, but the one who isn't may be at least a co-equal to the other three. Grandminico only won a single district bout last year, but he has blossomed this time around. He was 2nd at St. Xavier losing only to DiFabritus in a bout that got the latter boy the OW. He was 3rd at the MIT losing only to Palmer - - and that at 7-4. Channel however, leads him in experience. He is the nucleus of a Central Crossing squad that is very good. A district runner-up last year, he was a state quarter-finalist, but failed to place. Only a junior this was his second state tournament. This year he won at Franklin Hts., but was 2nd at Wadsworth to Krummert. Drake, also a junior, lost to Grandminico in the first round of district and then piled up five consolation wins for a 3rd. He did not win in Columbus dropping a close first round bout to Nickolai. He won at Upper Arlington and Kettering Fairmont and was 2nd at St. Xavier to DiFabritus. I'm not sure his schedule has been rigorous enough for a long state run. Sasfy, also a qualifier (he lost only to eventual state champ Palivoda at the district) won a first round bout before being eliminated. A failure by any of the top four would bring Moore into the picture who has won at Wapakoneta and placed everywhere else or, perhaps, Languis who has been on the periphery of this report recently.

When I look at the initial state bracket very early on Sunday morning there is almost never a name that is totally new to me. They may not be in my report, but I've heard of them, seen some of their results, and remember the school they represent. A name that completely blind-sided me last year was Nick DiFabritus. Here he was 3rd at

Fairfield winning five consolation bouts over familiar names like Melink and Meyer and ready to face Kyle Weaver in the first round of States. This year as the vanquished king said to Achilles in "Troy", I'll remember that name. DiFabritus has been very good. He won the SWOCA and then won at St. Xavier and Mason. He has become the man to beat at this district. Krummert is not far behind. He won the SWOCA at 135# over Meyer and beat Channel 7-6 to win at Wadsworth. He was 3rd at 125# at Fairfield last year, and after a first round loss finished 6th. That will be difficult to better. Gallagher looks like a totally different wrestler at 135#. After failing to place at 140# at the SWOCA he was 4th at 135# at Brecksville losing only to Skonieczny and Mencini and beating Sasfy and Wukie and then winning the CIT. He's on fire. This is an excellent trio, but Calkins, who was a district runner-up at 145#, also returns. He was 1st at Sycamore, but didn't place at the SWOCA at 140# after twice getting beaten badly. Those are four solid wrestlers to which we can add Fehring and perhaps state qualifier, Dooley, who was hurt at the SWOCA.

140 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICHIE SPICEL (BRUNSWICK)

Top Contenders

2	Habat (St. Ignatius)	14	Nickolai (Piqua)
3	Lang (Brecksville)	15	Schreiner (Mentor)
4	W. Sheppard (Kenmore)	16	Yetzer (Mansfield Madison)
5	Lijoi (Uniontown Lake)	17	Webb (Eastlake North)
6	Birt (St. Edward)	18	Pope (Elder)
7	Demas (Westerville North)	19	Ferguson (Holland Springfield)
8	Messerall (Thomas Worthington)	20	Brandenburg (Wadsworth)
9	Herrick (Waite)	21	Meenan (Wooster)
10	Marsh (Marysville)	22	Evans (Gahanna Lincoln)
11	Melink (Moeller)	23	Churchill (Elyria)
12	Leland (Colerain)	24	Goudy (Wayne)
13	Gordon (Scioto)	25	Fisher (Central Crossing)

This should just be a terrific weight class. There are so many good kids here we ought qualify 32 and give out 16 places. I count nine wrestlers who have a legitimate shot at the state title and they emerge from three of the four districts.

My choice by the narrowest of margins is former state champ Richie Spicel. I think that he has the best chance of winning because he has the least chance of getting upset on what will be a treacherous road to the finals. He is so good on his feet that he can, early on in a bout, create for himself a buffer from catastrophic error. Getting ahead by three or four points keeps a big move from being sure disaster and takes the referee out of looking for ways to help the wrestler who is a point behind. A junior high state runner-up - - he lost to Jedd Moore in overtime - he shocked us all by winning the state title at 130# his freshman year. An injury ruined his chances his sophomore year, and,

then, there was last year. His district qualifiers took the first four places at Columbus - - the only weight of 42 where that happened - - and they were all superb. At the districts Spicel beat Habat in the finals after Habat's semi-final upset of Jameson. However, at the state meet it was Jameson and Spicel with Tony winning his third title, 8-4. In a second (?) period flurry Spicel may have had control with Spicel on his back. It could have been two plus two (I'm not sure), but when Jameson regained control it really became the match decider.

Spicel seems to attract competition. The Perry District at 140# is sensational. Lang was 3rd at 112# last year after a 4th at 103# as a freshman. He was 3rd at his district losing to Mattingly and thus drew state champion Mitcheff in the first round, losing 5-4. Then came one of the greatest consolations runs I have ever seen. It included five wins - - the first by technical fall, then a decision over state placer Ciccarello, a major decision over state runner-up Genetin, a fall over state champion Mitcheff, and a fall over state placer Mattingly. This year I expected to see Lang at 130#. Instead he has moved up five weight classes and seems a touch small. At the Ironman he lost to Kolodzick in the quarter-finals and the #1 ranked Colin Johnston, by a point, later to finish 6th. At Brecksville he led Habat until the last seconds, 3-1, before giving up the tying takedown and, then, falling in overtime. He beat Shepard (in overtime) and state champion Sulzer to finish 3rd again. At the Dies he lost to Sheppard in the semis and finished - - 3rd. Lijoi is down a weight class from last year where he had a district 3rd and state 6th. He was 2nd at North Canton to Sheppard, 6-4, and 3rd at the MIT losing to Spicel 3-1, but pinning Demas. He is difficult to score against. That leaves Sheppard who had 45 wins last year and was 5th in the state in Division II. He lost to Skonieczny 10-8. He was 1st at North Canton, 2nd at the Dies and 5th at Brecksville losing a semi-final battle with Dukes, 16-15. He could win it all - - any of this four could win it all. I'd like to see pairings that let all four boys place at the district level. Coaches may have to do some serious thinking with three of the four coming from one sectional. Back-ups might include Schreiner, Webb or, maybe the young Brandenburg.

Things are not much easier at Harding. Habat had some freshman season last year. A two time junior high state champ, he was 35-3 at district time where he finished 2nd after his huge upset of Jameson. That loss was avenged in the state semi-finals with Habat taking 3rd. This year he was 1st at Brecksville beating Dukes, Lang, and Riedy and 1st at the CIT defeating Division II state champ Aaron Sulzer, but failing to win the MVP. He was upset by Herrick at the Ohio Duals, but will see him at the districts. I think that result will very likely be reversed. State placer Birt won the district last year with three falls, but had a horrible first round at Columbus. He came back to get 4th (he was also 6th in 2005), but had to be disappointed because that was a weight class just waiting for a champion. This year he failed to place at the Ironman and was not at the MIT. He was perfect at the Ohio Duals and then pinned Canty. It's difficult to know what he'll do. Herrick was a district runner-up at this weight class last year and was a state semi-finalist before falling to 6th. It was a great performance. As mentioned he owns a win over Habat and was an easy 1st at Waite crushing everybody. The only issue was Brecksville where he wrestled up a weight and finished 7th. He'd like to see Habat and

Birt on the other side of the draw at Harding. After this group maybe we'll see, Yetzer or Ferguson.

It's no easier at Darby. Demas is a prodigy. As a freshman last year in Division III he fought his way to the finals almost winning the team title for Pleasant. This year he is at Westerville and what a line-up of middle weights with Demas, Dong, and Kline. They'll make each other better. He was 4th at the MIT – losing in the semi-finals to a Michigan wrestler and getting pinned by Lijoi--and won handily at Fairfield. He is getting better all too rapidly. Messerall had a district 3rd at this weight class, but was 0 for 2 at Columbus. He was 1st at Marion Harding and 2nd at the Top Gun to Dukes 9-7. This is, as we've seen, a brutal weight class, but Messerall has high placement potential. Casey Gordon grabbed the fourth qualifying spot at 130# last year and ended up going 1-2 at States. This year he won at St. Xavier and has had a brilliant dual meet record. State qualifier Marsh - - is an exceptionally good fourth choice. He just recently won at Wapakoneta and his experience and tenacity should get him to States again. This is a formidable quartet leaving Evans looking for the upset somewhere at districts.

The Fairfield District looks outmanned and all three of the other districts will be hoping to draw into them for the first round. The best choice is district finalist Trevor Nickolai who has crafted another excellent season. A state quarter-finalist last year Spicel and Gasber knocked him out of the bracket, he has placed at the GMVWA, Edgewood, and Top Gun tournaments. Leland, 4th at the SWOCA, 2nd at Fairfield, and 1st at Sycamore is another steady performer. Melink, Pope, and Goudy are other possibilities, but there are I'm sure other candidates.

The pairings in Columbus will be interesting. If Spicel, Demas, and Habat all win their district then Spicel will be in one half and Habat and Demas in different quarter-brackets in the other half. If Lang wins instead of Spicel then Demas would get the open half bracket with Lang and Habat on the other side. If Sheppard were to win instead of Spicel then Demas and Habat would be on opposite sides with Sheppard randomly placed. Each case is different with winners and losers in all of them.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TONY JAMESON (FITCH)

Top Contenders

2	Gasber (unattached)	16	Schreiner (Mentor)
3	Suba (St. Edward)	17	Jenkins (Cloverleaf)
4	Stevens (Lakota West)	18	Cruz (Lorain Southview)
5	Crabtree (Darby)	19	Roshon (Marysville)
6	D'Alessandro (Mayfield)	20	Smith (Oak Hills)
7	Klontz (Springfield North)	21	Valliant (Sandusky)
8	Gordon (Scioto)	22	Brenner (Canfield)
9	Wiggins (Maple Hts.)	23	Sturwold (Troy)
10	Haxton (Strongsville)	24	Frasure (Logan)
11	Caraballo (St. Ignatius)	25	Ball (Wadsworth)
12	Gorrasi (Elder)	26	Otmar (Moeller)
13	J. Sheppard (Kenmore)	27	Luft (Teays Valley)
14	Rhoades (Uniontown Lake)	28	Sparks (Hamilton)
15	Smith (Davidson)	29	Rhyman (Marion Franklin)

As discussed in the past, there have been 15 wrestlers who won three state titles by the onset of the senior year and all 15 won that fourth title. They are a combined 60-0 at the state meet. There have been some close calls, but all have won. That brings us to Tony Jameson trying to become the sixteenth four-time champ and the fourth to win all of them at the Division I level. One of the most entertaining and acrobatic wrestlers in Ohio history he makes wrestling fun to watch. There is no opportunity to risky to attempt, no chance that wouldn't be fun to take, and no maneuver to wild to try, especially if he gets bored during the bout. Only one other four-time champ had a similar philosophy - - the incomparable Johnny McGhee. I am partial to such wrestlers. The risk/reward equation in this sport is skewed to the defensive side. Referees and their rules seem, almost always, to give the benefit of the doubt to the defensive wrestler. It's ruined post-collegiate freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling where new rules are concocted annually to generate action and scoring. College wrestling has disappeared from much of the country not only because of Title IX, but because it generates long stretches of boredom. Even at the top-levels of high school wrestling we see too many 2-1 bouts and contests that drift through countless overtimes. Wrestlers like Jameson make it interesting and exciting and give athleticism the opportunity to be showcased.

Now, after all that, I think Jameson needs to show just a smidgen of patience. His two recent losses were exceptional theater, but they point out that good set-ups take a little time. In the 11-9 Toal loss Jameson scored most of the 20 points--nine for himself and a bunch more for Toal. There is no one in Division I who can beat Jameson, except, maybe, himself, but I am fully confident that next year when Palmer and Taylor head for their fourth titles I'll be able to say that those who had such opportunities were a combined 64-0.

Jameson exits a crowded Perry District. One wrestler who will apparently not be there is the marvelously talented Gasber. Like Jameson, unorthodox and a scorer, their bout would have lit up the scoreboard. Unfortunately, his transfer to Madison has offended some misguided regulation and, after being the MVP at North Coast and Hudson, he will be deemed ineligible. Now I understand precedent, my daughter is in law school, but if both schools sign off on the transfer to a home school which apparently had monetary underpinnings who has been harmed? How does it benefit anyone that Gasber is not allowed to wrestle? I get cranky writing this after midnight. At any rate there will be no lack of wrestlers looking to snatch one of the last three qualification spots. D'Alessandro was a Division III state quarter-finalist who has adjusted back to big school wrestling. He was 1st at the Big 8, 2nd at Kenston and 5th at the Top Gun. Wiggins, Schreiner, and Rhoades are experienced seniors with past district experience and a portfolio of tournament placements--unfortunately, not that many are titles, though Rhoades did win at North Canton. That gives Haxton a real shot at qualification. He was 2nd at Solon and the Big 8 while being a steady placer—all at 152#. Brenner and Williams (Nordon) are also good, but the one to watch is the young Shepard--a junior high state runner-up last year. Explosive, he was 3rd at North Canton, 4th at Solon, and 5th at the Dies, and 8th at Brecksville. He had some big wins (Gorrasi) but he's probably a year away. Another strong freshman is Ball – who was 2nd at the Big 8 and Wadsworth, and don't forget Jenkins--a super sized version of a state champion father.

At the beginning of the year I saw a three-way shootout at this district between state placer Goins, state qualifier Gooden, and Suba. As I write this Gooden is apparently no longer competing and Goins will wrestle at 152# that leaves Suba, the hero of the Blair Dual meet, at the top spot. He was champ at the MIT, 3-0 at the Ohio Duals, and 8th at the Ironman - - losing by two to Jordan and one to Habat. Cruz and Valliant have just moved down to 145# after enjoying moderate success at 152#. The wildcard here is Caraballo. He beat Chris Phillips – oops, that's the one from Georgia - - at Brecksville (losing to Canty) and was 2nd at the CIT (again losing to Cauty). He won two district bouts last year and in a depleted weight class, if this so becomes, he should qualify.

The Darby District is far more crowded than usual. The younger Gordon had a great freshman season at 140# last year winning 35 bouts including one at districts. This year he won at St. Xavier and is top-rated in the Columbus area. Klontz is also a returning state qualifier and he was runner-up at both the GMVWA and Troy. The intriguing candidate is Crabtree who has already won three tournaments--Darby, Mt. Vernon and Waite-- beating Valliant 9-3 at the last one. He's down from the 152# class where he wrestled last year winning two district bouts. Add in Roshon who was a bout from state qualification last year. I didn't see him at Brecksville, but he just won at Wapakoneta that suggests he is healthy and ready to compete. Two-time junior high placer Lehman (Westerville North) is also here with, maybe, Rhyman as a long shot.

Both Stevens and Gorrasi wrestled excellent district tournaments last year finishing 2nd and 3rd respectively, and Stevens ended up placing 8th at States while Gorrasi won a bout. This year they met in the SWOCA semi-finals with Stevens winning 8-6. He finished 2nd while Gorrasi defaulted down to 6th. Perhaps bothered by injury Gorrasi did

not place at Brecksville and was 5th at the CIT. Otmar has been in and out of the Moeller line-up, but he was 3rd at the SWOCA and 4th at the CIT. Xu, Sparks, and Smith are other possibilities, but they have inconsistent results. Sparks beat Otmar early at the SWOCA, but was tech failed by Gorrasi. Otmar came back to get 3rd while Sparks failed to place. I think they'll be a couple of surprising qualifiers here. Cable just might be one of them.

152

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JESSE DONG (WESTERVILLE NORTH)

Top Contenders

2	Heflin (Massillon Perry)	15	Porter (Mason)
3	Goins (Elyria)	16	Brubaker (Start)
4	Ewing (Miamisburg)	17	DeMarinis (Boardman)
5	Gobin (Moelller)	18	Rowe (Barberton)
6	Carraher (St. Xavier)	19	Ferguson (Pickerington North)
7	Greco (Fitch)	20	Wharton (Clay)
8	Hayes (Mayfield)	21	DiSabato (Davidson)
9	Rigel (Tecumseh)	22	Russ (Nordonia)
10	Martinson (St. Edwards)	23	Ramirez (Toledo St. Francis)
11	Henry (Westlake)	24	Zehler (Edgewood)
12	Hendon (Bowling Green)	25	Arens (Lakota West)
13	Jindra (Mentor)	26	Burkley (Jerome)
14	Maglott (Mt Vernon)	27	Brumfield (Mansfield)
		28	Sarno (Perrysburg)

I thought Dong was one of the best kids in the state last year. He was so crushingly dominant that it seemed almost impossible that he could lose. At a good solid district his closest bout was 18-2 and that was against a returning state place winner. It got a little closer in Columbus; but state runner-up couldn't score a point against him in the semi-finals. I had picked the marvelous Hardy to win his third state title. To me it was going to be one of the highlight bouts of the evening - - and it was. The key situation at the side of the mat was an apparent Dong takedown that Hardy suddenly, by some legerdemain, turned into a five-point move. Bob Dieli said immediately afterward -- substantially shortened and edited by me--that Dong had lost to a freakishly athletic force of nature. And so he did 9-4.

This year Dong has been the irresistible force -- with one exception. At Medina he defeated the excellent Heflin, 13-2, in the semi-final. In the last seconds Kusar, who has been simply superb himself, hit a last-second, controversial four-point move to win 5-4. That's not going to happen in the Division I States. Dong can spot anyone here a half-dozen points and still win--comfortably. This is one of the best and deepest weight classes, but it doesn't matter, Dong is too good. I'd love to see a four man wrestle off with Moore, Boyd, Kusar, and Dong going at it. Now that would be great theater.

By my strictly random method of parceling out Dayton wrestlers state placer Ewing should end up at Darby - - just as he did last year. At that time he rebounded from a quarterfinal defeat (by Andreas) and wrestled brilliantly to finish 3rd. He maintained that momentum defeating Hendon and Gobin to reach the semi-finals before Hardy dropped him into the consolation round. He ended up 4th losing at the very end to Andreas once again. He has been Miamisburg's best this year, winning at Sycamore and finishing 2nd at North Canton and the GMVWA - - losing respectively to Kusar and Boyd. He and Dong should dominate this district. Maglott is a scoring machine, tough on his feet, but is a clear step (or two) behind the top duo. His big win was over Porter at Mt. Vernon. Below this trio it really is a question of who from the Southwest District shows up. Zehler, 1st at Edgewood and 2nd at Sycamore, would be, for example, a strong candidate. The fourth spot however is wide open with Ferguson or DiSabato also in the picture. Burkley winner at Coffman and Upper Arlington has turned in some impressive wins and needs to be considered.

The deepest district without question is at Perry. My view is that there are as many as ten viable candidates for the four state berths. In the next section it becomes clear that there is a dearth of good 160's. No doubt others have noticed this strange imbalance and I would not be surprised to see several of this group emigrate to the adjacent weight class. As it currently stands I think that Heflin is clearly the best of this assembled multitude. He has been a "beast" most of the year. A junior, he was a state qualifier two years ago going 1-2 at 125#, but didn't get out last year losing to Mencini and Potts, 7-6 in his go-to-state bout and ending up as the state alternate. This year he has been great with his only losses being to the very best. He was 7th at the Ironman, losing to Kusar and Boyd and 3rd at Medina - - beating state runner-up Tank twice, but losing to Dong. He pinned Haxton to win at the Big 8, and was 3-9 at the Ohio Duals pounding Gobin 9-1. He'd like to draw away from Dong at states. A wild card here is Cory Hayes. As a freshman last year he was a district finalist at 130# and lost two tough, close state bouts. What can we expect from him now that he is up four weight classes, had a serious football injury, and started practice last week? My guess is we can expect a lot - - he'll certainly be fresh. I wondered whether it was a fluke that Greco was a finalist at Brecksville beating Georgia champ Lanham and Goins in the process. However, he was 3rd at the Top Gun--losing only to Kusar--so he's for real. He has had to be flexible competing at weight classes around Jameson. Last year he didn't get out of the sectional at a weight class that I thought was the toughest in the state the first week of tournaments. After this trio there is a litany of names of wrestlers with good credentials. Jindra was one bout from States last year and has placed well at Solon, Brecksville and the Top Gun. DeMarinis was a state alternate at this class last year, but has struggled a bit this year. Russ is the Kenston champ while Rowe was 4th at the Dies and has substantial district experience. There is a lot of talent here. I'm saying Heflin, Greco, and Hayes qualify with the bracket configuration a prime factor in who else qualifies

There is a powerful trio of wrestlers at Fairfield. Gobin was 5th three years ago as a freshman at 112#. After weight issues as a sophomore he returned to Columbus last year as the district champ at 145# and finished 7th losing to Ewing by a point in the

quarter-finals. This year he got knocked out of the Ironman by, who else, Kusar, and was 2nd at the SWOCA losing in overtime to Carraher. He has since avenged that defeat with a 6-2 win in the CIT finals. When he wrestles with confidence he is excellent. Carraher was a district 4th last year, and drew three-time champ Hardy in the first round. In most years he'd be a lock to place, but at this crowded field he'll have to be at the top of his game. Rigel is the X factor. He was the district champ at 135# besting a representative field. He had an unlucky draw for a #1 seed getting three-time champ Jameson in the quarter-finals and then losing to Webb in overtime. This is a talented wrestler who doesn't hit a lot of the big tournaments. However, he was a solid 3rd at the GMVWA losing only to Ewing. He'll need to be handled with care. Porter is the top candidate for the last spot finishing 5th at the SWOCA, 2nd at St. Xavier. You might look to Barron, a placer at both the SWOGA and GMVWA, and Arens as other possibilities - - especially the latter wrestler.

Every district is strong and Harding is no exception. I like Goins best. He is just so physical and bruising who would want to wrestle him. At last years district he lost to Lowe in the quarter-finals, but raced through the consolation bracket to finish 3rd, beating Lowe 4-3. He was a state quarter-finalist before getting mauled by Lybarger and finished 5th. He was at 145# at the Ironman and was eliminated by Toal. At Brecksville at 152# he lost a semi-final tie-breaker to Greco - - it could have gone either way - and then seemed to lose interest getting shut out 16-0 in the next two consolation bouts. Rather short I would not be surprised to see him return to 145#. Henry who I've also discussed at 160# could return here, and, if so, has solid qualification chances. Martinson keeps getting better and that must continue if he is to qualify. He did not place at the Ironman or Brecksville, but was 3-0 at the Ohio Duals defeating Gobin. In recent duals he has beaten Jindra, Spence, and Jones suggesting he is primed for a run here. Obviously, if Goins or Henry or both move his chances skyrocket. There are five strong possibilities out of the Toledo area, three of whom have just dropped down. This group is led by Hendon, a district semi-finalist last year, and a state alternate. At the BG Duals he was 9-1 (losing up at 160#) and majored state qualifier D'Alessandro. Brubaker, down from 171#, might be the second best if weight does not become an issue. He was 2nd at Northwood at 171#, but won convincingly at Waite pinning Wharton at this class in the finals. Wharton, down from 160#, is also very good. He won at Northwood, Ramirez, now a senior, pulled a big first-round district upset, but then lost the next two. He was 5th at the CIT and 4th at Tiffin. He'll have to do better to qualify. Brumfield, also has district experience winning twice before being eliminated by Goins. He was 1st at Bellevue and 2nd at the Gorman. A long- shot here is Sarno.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHRIS KLINE (WESTERVILLE NORTH)

Top Contenders

2	Bryan (St. Ignatius)	14	Calhoun (Green)
3	Rice (Davidson)	15	Green (St. Edward)
4	Ellis (Western Brown)	16	Kovach (Brush)
5	Nickolai (Piqua)	17	Pankewicz (Fitch)
6	Torres (Fairfield)	18	Kirkbride (Bowling Green)
7	Rhodes (Nordonia)	19	Korecky (Solon)
8	Maserang (Mueller)	20	Launer (Darby)
9	Dilley (Lancaster)	21	Berman (Beavercreek)
10	Munson (Anthony Wayne)	22	Crawford (Ellet)
11	Ormiston (Teays Valley)	23	Childs (Glen Este)
12	Moore (Hoover)	24	Hagenimana (Centerville)
13	Tomanek (Avon Lake)	25	Winters (Princeton)
		26	Babuder (Toledo St. Francis)

In the last few years we have seen some great long lasting match-ups at this weight class - - for example Nemec vs. Foore and Ciraky vs. Popham. That will not be the case this time. In fact, it is very difficult to decide what match-up we will see. Part of the problem as we proceed through the upper weights in Division I is the enormous number of seniors who competed at the state last year. In the weight classes from 152# through 189# - that four weight classes - - 64 wrestlers qualified for the state meet. Of that number 53 were seniors (compared to 34 in Division II and 38 in Division III) meaning this year we will see a lot of new faces in Columbus.

My choice is, however, someone we have already seen twice at the state meet, but who has not always had good fortune. As a freshman Kline lost his state quarterfinal bout in overtime and just failed to place. The next year, after a tremendous regular season, he had a bad district tournament and, in an enormous surprise, failed to qualify. Last year Mickley caught him in the district finals and he ended up in the same quarter-bracket as two-time champ Straughn. A narrow two-point loss put him in the consolation round where he finished a solid 4th--including a 10-1 win over Mickley. Like Central District wrestlers Enright and Horne the past few years he has paid his dues and its time to win it all. He was 1st at Medina, though a couple of matches were closer than I would have anticipated, and 1st at Fairfield over Torres. I think it's his time.

He will not have an easy district. The compact Rice is strong and experienced. He had a difficult state draw at 145# last year getting Gonsor and Gobin early and failing to place. He was 6th at Brecksville wrestling the tough, defensive, hard-nosed style--splitting two low-scoring battles with Georgia state runner-up Bradley Banks and losing a one-pointer to Cheatham. I think he could make 152# (pure supposition on my part),

but I think his chances of winning it all are better here. Certainly, he should be opposite Kline in the state draw. Both Ormiston (1st at Darby and Franklin Hts.) and Dilley have district experience (and wins) while Launer has been a steady placer. All five are Central Division products and I'm guessing the excellent Nickolai may be there, too. He was 1st at Edgewood and the Gorman and 3rd at the GMVWA. However, this might be one of those times when it is better to head to Fairfield.

Speaking of Fairfield I see two solid placement contenders at this class. Torres qualified for state action at 140# last year, but failed to place. This year he was 2nd at both Kenston and Fairfield losing to Kline, 6-2, in the latter tournament. Ellis was the state alternate at this weight class losing to Newburg in the quarterfinals. He has won two major tournament titles at Kettering Fairmont and the SWOCA. That leaves two state berths still unaccounted for. Maserang was 2nd at the CIT losing to Bryan 9-5. He went 3-0 at the Ohio Duals, but failed to place at the SWOCA after losing a tough 12-10 overtime battle in the quarterfinals. Child was 3rd at Sycamore and 4th at the SWOCA after winning 33 bouts last year. Winters has pretty much the same kind of track record, but did pin Maserang. Hagenimana and Boggs are other options with the latter wrestler winning at Sycamore.

It will be interesting to see what happens as east versus west clashes at Harding. Representing the Toledo area are two successful seniors trying to build on their district appearance. Munson has over 100 career victories after taking the title at Waite and going undefeated at Springfield. Kirkbride has spent most of the year at 171# and just moved back down to 160#. Also moving down was Babuder who was 4th at Tiffin and 3rd at the CIT where he took Bryan into overtime. Representing the west side of Cleveland at this district will be a trio of solid performers. The best is Bryan who was 8th at Brecksville, 5th at the Ironman (where he reached the semi-finals after beating the #2 seed), and 1st at the CIT (over Maserang). Like Torres he was a state qualifier at 140#. Henry pulled a major upset in the first round at districts upsetting Evan Roth. He won one other bout before being eliminated. He has wrestled at 152# much of the year so I will be rating him at that weight class. Westlake doesn't wrestle many tournaments, but he was 3rd at Southview, beating Tomanek, what I like about Henry is that he is a scorer and able to put points on the board. Tomanek has qualification ability finishing 2nd at Southview and a strong 1st at Avon Lake. He had over 30 wins last year. I wonder if he is related to the Indians' former left-hander Dick Tomanek who I actually saw pitch for the Tribe in the early 1950's. Also check out Tischler who was 3rd at Wadsworth and 7th at the Top Gun.

While Perry is just incredibly loaded at most weight classes--especially up to 145#--this is one exception. Rhodes may be the best finishing 3rd at both North Canton and Kenston. A sectional champ last year he won two district bouts. Moore also had a good district last year, but failed to place at North Canton. He'll need to come on strong in February. I thought Kovach looked tough at Mentor last year, but so far "tough" hasn't won as much as anticipated. That leaves Calhoun, Hildreth and Korecky as possibilities, but there has to be other challengers as well. Maybe, Pankewicz can be a factor here or Crawford, who was 2nd at Wadsworth.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPTION: BRIAN RODDY (ST. EDWARD)

Top Contenders

2	Harasyn (Mentor)	14	Darlington (Stow)
3	Winemiller (Amherst)	15	Hofmeyer (Elder)
4	Faiella (Central Crossing)	16	Ajayi (Shaker Hts)
5	Geter (Hamilton)	17	Gilmore (Teays Valley)
6	Phillips (Massillon Perry)	18	Cook (Reynoldsburg)
7	M. Alexander (Findley)	19	Hilton (Moeller)
8	Adams (Harrison)	20	Senter (Xenia)
9	Randolph (Wadsworth)	21	Tatum (Marion Franklin)
10	Stewart (Strongsville)	22	Slusher (Milford)
11	Martinez (Lorain Southview)	23	Tischler (Hoover)
12	Houston (Maple Hts)	24	Carey (Mason)
13	Mathews (Fairfield)	25	Moore (Sandusky)

Roddy has been a superstar wrestler for the past three years. He is already a three time placer at this weight class (6-2-1, and is a heavy favorite to win again this year. Two years ago he wrestled a dominating state tournament only to lose to Kilgore in the finals. Last year he wrestled a sensational state meet this time beating Kilgore 14-12 in overtime. It was a classic that featured great takedowns, surprising comebacks, and an unexpected ending. This year Roddy was a central figure in the "Monroeville frenzy" when he lost to Chris Phillip--a Kilgore protégé--in the Ironman final. It appeared to impact Roddy for a week or two, but he rebounded with a thoroughly dominating performance at Medina (beating the excellent Witt, 10-3 in the finals). He'll go down as one of the great upper weight wrestlers in St. Edward history.

Roddy had three falls and a 19—7 decision at last years district,, but it may be marginally more difficult this year. State qualifier Winemiller (Phillips also beat him) returns and should qualify again. He lost in the state quarterfinals 10-9 ott and couldn't come back and place. He was 1st at Avon Lake and is 16-1 outside the Brecksville Tourney. Alexander, the younger of two excellent brothers, was 1-2 at the district level as a freshman last year. He should qualify after finishing 3rd at Marion Harding and 2nd at Sylvania Southview. There are two other solid possibilities in Martinez and Ajayi. The first named lost his first district bout last year and then won three consolation bouts before falling to Winemiller in his go-to-state bout. He was 1st at Waite and 2nd at Southview and is very physical. Ajayi is, quite frankly, better than I thought. He was 1st at Kenston, 2nd at Solon, and 5th at North Canton winning big bouts and staying close when he lost.

I have hunted in vain for someone that I think is within a half dozen points of Roddy. Not going to happen this year. Nobody at Perry won more than two district bouts last year. There are seven possible candidates out there and I need to invent some special

computerized sorting system to differentiate this group. It could be that if we were somehow able to replicate this district weight class many times Harasyn would have the highest proportion of wins. Now seven weeks away from football and at 171# he is ready for the stretch run. He was 4th at the Top Gun in his first tourney at that weight and that suggests better things to come. He was a district finalist last year (losing to Roddy) and reached the quarterfinals where Kilgore put him out. Phillips and Randolph had a great bout at the Big 8 with Phillips winning--and Randolph getting 2nd as he did at North Canton. The one to watch in my mind is Stewart who was 1st at Solon and 3rd at the Big 8 after getting caught by Randolph. A district placewinner at 215# last year and with 30+ wins he could win here. I also like Darlington and Houston with former winning at Hudson and the latter twice runner-up at Kenston and Hudson. That leaves the overlooked Tischler who just keeps nailing down low places and the mysterious Kerrigan (Medina) with whom I am unfamiliar.

I am just not seeing much in the lower half of the state. Geter got a district 4th last year, but went "two and out" at Columbus. He had kind schizophrenic two weeks around Christmas. At the SWOCA he didn't have a close bout romping home to victory, but then the next weekend was only 7th at the GMVWA including a 19-4 loss to Rhoads. If the first Geter shows up he'll win this district. Adams was 2nd at the SWOCA and 3rd at Wadsworth losing only to the eventual champion and might be next best although not making the finals at Fairfield surprised. Hofmeyer, 7th at Brecksville, has past district experience, but I like Mathews to surpass a couple of this group. He was 3rd at Kenston and 1st at Fairfield. Also check out Hilton and Slusher in what should be a hard-fought district.

The major player at Harding is Faiella who was a district finalist last year at 160# after three dominating wins. This year he was 2nd at Wadsworth and Franklin Hts. and was perfect at the Ohio Duals including a 10-8 win over Hofmeyer. Gilmore is probably second best in the Central District, but Faiella beat him by ten recently. Senter and Tatum met in the first consolation round at districts last year, but I think they'll do much better this year. Brooks and Cook are other possibilities.

189 #

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ANDREW TUMLIN (HARRISON)

Top Contenders

2	Lamberg (Kenmore)	14	Benton (Waite)
3	Isley (Sylvania Southview)	15	Godfrey (Glen Este)
4	Jontony (Strongsville)	16	Mincy (Mt. Healthy)
5	Quehl (Moeller)	17	Krajicek (Holland Springfield)
6	Alexander (Findlay)	18	Baker (Green)
7	Newburg (Northmont)	19	Borgstrom (Middletown)
8	Saranitti (Stow)	20	Gluvna (Madison)
9	Robertson (Normandy)	21	Tudor (Watkins Memorial)
10	Nelisse (Elyria)	22	Wenrich (Amherst)
11	Allen (Hamilton)	23	Taylor (Lakota West)
12	Sanders (St. Charles)	24	Brooks (Hayes)
13	Porter (Mason)	25	Friend (North Ridgeville)
14	Miller (Centerville)	26	Terry (Colerain)

In what has to be a rather unusual situation, only four wrestlers at this weight class have had previous state experience--and two of those were at 160#. In this case it should make for a wide open competition with lots of surprises since most here have not experienced the pressure of state tournament wrestling. That is not an inconsequential factor as first time qualifiers often under-perform for that very reason. I think that there are at least four possible winners with no one having more than about a 50% chance of triumphing.

My choice is the junior Andrew Tumlin who has won three major tournaments this year. He has been 6th and 5th the past two years and that progression won't get you to the top step of the podium until you are a sophomore in college. So Tumlin dropped from 215# to 189# despite the fact that he was a state semi-finalist at the higher weight last year. It has worked. He dominated at the SWOCA and Fairfield, and beat a major rival, Isley, 5-4 to win at Wadsworth. I'm not sure he has the athleticism of a Lamberg or Isley, but he does have the experience and technique to make up for it.

Lamberg, a state junior high champ just two years ago, has been amazing. He has won four major tournaments--Solon, North Canton, Brecksville, and the Dies--against top-grade competition. He really is a co-favorite with Tumlin. His best tournament had to be Brecksville where this sophomore outwrestled the outstanding senior, Jeremy Foster. His combination of quickness and power will win him a state title or two - - perhaps, starting this year.

Isley, a junior was a district finalist at Mentor and a state quarter-finalist last year. I saw him at Mentor and he was impressive. Big and strong he has good riding skills and

some nice takedowns. This year he was 2nd at Wadsworth and 1st at Waite where he pinned in both the semi-finals and finals. He can go with either Tomlin or Lamberg, but may be susceptible to the big upset.

It looked for a while that Tumlin would pretty much have things his way at Fairfield - - then Quehl dropped down to join him. Like Tumlin, Quehl was a state qualifier at 215# last year finishing 3rd in this district. After a first round win he met state champ Powell in the quarterfinals and Hale immediately thereafter and was eliminated. This year he was 2nd to Scales at the SWOCA at 215# and came within a point of placing at the Ironman. If he wants to win a state title this is his best bet--and it's a good one--as he proved at the CIT with a dominating triumph. He cannot be overlooked here. Allen was 2nd at the SWOCA and won two district bouts last year. He is probably third best. State alternate Mincy has dropped back a bit, he was 5th at Edgewood and 3rd at Sycamore after getting pinned by Godfrey. I'm not sure what to expect from him. There are a quartet of wrestlers who will push Mincy for that fourth spot and his qualification is certainly in doubt. Porter is at the top of the list after a great freshman year (three district wins and 2nd at St. X and 1st at Mt. Vernon) along with Godfrey, the champion at Sycamore. Throw in Terry and Borgstrom and it will be an exciting struggle behind Tumlin and Allen.

Lamberg must also prepare for a very competitive district. Jontony has turned a lot of heads with his excellent wrestling. He had a bad district last year, but has made a quantum leap forward since then. He won the Mayfield Big 8 losing only to Foster. Big and strong he has become very good. State qualifier Saranitti is up from 160# and has prospered at this new weight class. He won at Hudson and was 3rd at the Dies - - losing by a pair to Lamberg. District placer (6th) Robertson should get the last state berth. Wrestling mainly dual meets he has been dominate. I'm thinking, maybe, a couple of Lake County wrestlers will be factors, too. Gluvna lost by two to both Saranitti and Nelisse while finishing 2nd at North Coast and 3rd at Hudson. Denman, up from 160#, won at Riverside, and was 3rd at Medina. Baker has been a steady placer (2nd WIT, 5th Wadsworth, 4th Dies)--enough so as to keep an eye on.

There is, for a change, some depth at Harding, Isley is very good, but he'll be challenged by Alexander, who I suspect defeated him at Sylvania Southview (where is Jamie Baker when you really need him). At any rate Alexander was very impressive at districts last year; losing in the semis to Isley by two and then having that same margin of loss to state place winner lammarino. He should get out this year and a solid placement is likely. He must avoid the costly upset such as the one at Marion Harding. Nelisse will be a huge factor. He was 7th at the Ironman losing to Foster by just two points. He was also 7th at Brecksville getting bounced by Bailey and then winning five consolation bouts before losing to Bailey again. Krajicek is my fourth choice here. He was 4th at Medina and 3rd at Perrysburg--two of his tournament losses have been to two-time state champion Magrum. I have three back-ups for this quartet--and all three were at this district weight class last year. I like Benton the best with Wenrich and Friend a half step behind.

None of my top challengers come from Darby, but there are still some high quality participants. Newburg is up from 160# where he was a district champion. After 10-0 blowout win in the first round of States he lost badly the next two rounds and was eliminated. This year he was 1st at St. Xavier (defeating Porter) and 1st at GMVWA. He should place. I will mention Snyder at 215# where all of my results for him occurred, but I have been told he will compete at this weight. If so, only Newburg is better. I also like Sanders and Miller with Tudor a long shot. Much of this is conjectural since we will not know the Dayton area split until after this report is completed. As it is expected some unfamiliar names will qualify from this district.

215

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ORLANDO SCALES (ELDER)

Top Contenders

2	Cogar (Barberton)	14	Mueller (Toledo St. John)
3	Smith (Beavercreek)	15	Primavera (Darby)
4	Hayes (Mayfield)	16	Konah (Maple Hts.)
5	Cook (Reynoldsburg)	17	Richards (Wadsworth)
6	Rasho (Uniontown Lake)	18	Fleming (Olentangy)
7	Brooks (Northmont)	19	Miller (Lakota East)
8	Lawson (Shaker Hts)	20	Krimmer (Glen Este)
9	Miller (Fitch)	21	Smugala (Westlake)
10	Zifzal (North Royalton)	22	Knowles (Springfield North)
11	Snyder (Grove City)	23	Romine (Xenia)
12	Banks (Edgewood)	24	Knapp (Olmsted Falls)
13	Green (St. Edward)	25	Cromie (Euclid)

There is a fascinating three-way struggle for supremacy at this weight class. Cogar, very short for this weight class, is extremely good. He was the state runner-up last year losing to Powell, 1-0. Clearly, after losing by fall to the same opponent the previous week, he was able to make effective modifications in his approach. This year he won at Cuyahoga Hts., Medina, and the Dies including some very significant wins perhaps, the most important, a win over another of the trio Cody Smith by 9-3 at Medina. Cogar also defeated Scales, last year, 6-3. The junior Orlando Scales, has yet to taste defeat this year. He looked awesome at Brecksville but Fisher's forfeit in the final deprived us of seeing him in action against a powerful opponent. Still his athleticism and confidence lead me to believe that he'll beat Cogar this time. They'll be seeded apart so the earliest that could occur would be the final round. The wild card is Smith who did not escape his district last year--in a major surprise. He has lost twice this year but as football season changes to wrestling he gets better and better.

Cogar will emerge from the best district. The junior Cody Hayes won four consolation bouts to nail down a district 3rd last year, and went 1-2 in Columbus. This year he

dominated at the Mayfield Big 8 and then was a finalist at the Top Gun before forfeiting to Porter. He has had injuries issues all year, and started the season late getting a 3rd at Kenston. If healthy he has middle to high placement potential. Rasha has been in a wrestling slump, but he is still a tremendous prospect. He was a state placer at this weight class two years ago as a sophomore, but he tailed off at the end of last year finishing 4th in the district and losing 13-6 to Cogar. He went 1-2 in Columbus--losing two very close bouts--and failed to place. Now a senior he was 6th at North Canton (losing 14-3 to Houska) and did not compete at Medina. He needs one last big push the next six weeks. Miller was a heavyweight last year, but has made a nice transition to this weight class. He was 5th at Brecksville and 3rd at the Top Gun losing only to Hayes. Zifzal was 1-2 at last year's district losing to Lawson and state champion Powell, but he continues to improve. He was 3rd at Brecksville losing only to Fisher and pinning Cook--a bout that was reversed at Waite when Cook won 2-1 and Zifzal was 3rd again. This is a strong quintet, but don't forget Konah. He beat Smugaca, 17-5, to win at Hudson, but was only 5th at Kenston losing to Hayes (3-1) and Poucher. Richards, 2nd at the Big 8 and 3rd at Wadsworth could also be a factor.

The two southern districts will both be good, but, as always it is difficult to know where the Dayton wrestlers will be. Scales should win at Fairfield, but will still get a solid workout even with Quehl moving to 189#. The junior Brooks split two bouts with Quehl at the district level, but was TF'ed by Scales. He was gone after a 0-2 record at Columbus. This year he was 1st at St. X but failed to place at GMVWA. He had 10 losses going into last year's district, but was strong when it really mattered. Krimmer was 2nd to Banks in overtime at Sycamore and 5th at the SWOCA, he joins Knowles and Romine as potential qualifiers

Assuming Smith is at Darby he will go in as the district favorite. Banks won at Sycamore and was 1st at Edgewood, but I'm not sure how he'll do at Harding. Cook is the best in the Central District now that Beatty has moved to 285#. He won at Waite and was 4th at Brecksville. Snyder, a state alternate at 189# last year, was 1st at Darby and 2nd at Waite. He lost there in that ultimate overtime so they're close - - that is if he remains at this weight class or eventually chooses to compete at 189#. Primavera has been a consistent placer at Darby, Tiffin, and Waite and cannot be counted out. Snyder defeated him 5-2. The one unknown here is Fleming. He won at Wadsworth, but was only 4th at Coffman. He could be a surprise. Longshots like Mulkey and Spracklen could have a chance.

The Harding District is real weak. That new distribution of teams from the Northeast Sectionals has really watered down the competition. Lawson may be the best with a 2nd at Solon and Kenston--losing to Porter both times--and a 3rd at North Canton losing to Fisher. Only a junior he beat Zifzal at last years district and a lost close bout to state placer Nemunaitis. After him there is not a lot to say. Mueller is probably best out of the Toledo area, while Smugala, Green, and Knapp have been the leaders (after Lawson) from the Northeast. I suspect that there are a couple of sleepers (Santana?) who I have overlooked.

285

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOSH KLINE (MASON)

Top Contenders

2	Beatty (Central Crossing)	16	Rupert (Waite)
3	Prichard (Northmont)	17	Laird (Olmsted Falls)
4	Meder (Valley Forge)	18	Oglesbee (Olentangy)
5	McCarthy (Strongsville)	19	Beverly (West Carrollton)
6	Buzzelli (Wadsworth)	20	Johnson (Brecksville)
7	Jones (Uniontown Lake)	21	Stocum (Riverside)
8	McCaskey (Gahanna Lincoln)	22	Isham (Harrison)
9	Carpenter (St. Xavier)	23	Augustyniak (Start)
10	Byrd (North Ridgeville)	24	Marrero (Reynoldsburg)
11	Pope (Maple Hts.)	25	Baker (Sandusky)
12	Meyers (Lakota West)	26	Brading (Troy)
13	Coher (Barberton)	27	Williams (Pickerington Central)
14	Holcomb (Wilmington)	28	Reinold (Coffman)
15	Klayman (Western Hills)	29	

We've had three sensational years of heavyweight competition, but they all have graduated. Has the Central District ever had a better contemporaneous set of heavyweights than Barlow, Hartshorn and Jeremiah?--and what about the Southwest District with Becker, Marshall, Wade and Wagner. Well, those days are gone and we're back to searching every part of the state for good heavyweights. And what we have found is almost perfect parity with no one individual or even group of individuals standing out. Ask the next ten "experts" as to the winner and you're likely to get ten different names. Only one place winner returns--and he was 8th--and he got there on an overtime decision.

I think the final match-up will be the same as last year - - the best from the Darby District versus the best from Fairfield - - Kline vs. Beatty. Paraphrasing Damon Runyon the biggest and most powerful don't always win, but that's the way to bet, you have to go with Kline. A state qualifier last year (Pritchard pinned him for 3rd place) he went 0-2 at Columbus. This year, somewhat more auspiciously, he won at the SWOCA pinning both Carpenter and Meyers. He then beat Prichard, 4-1, to win at St. X. Beatty, who was 7th at 215# last year, started the year at that same weight class, but has moved up with great success. He won at Darby and Waite beating Southwick in the latter final.

The Field is real thin at Harding. State qualifier Meder has made amazing progress and he stands clear of the rest of the field. He was 2nd at the Ironman and gave defending champ and highly ranked Garrett Goebel a tremendous bout in the final. If not for the miniscule mats at that tournament I believe he would have won it in regulation with either of two good takedown attempts. Instead he lost in overtime. After that it is wide-

open. State qualifier Williams would have been rated second best. He had four district falls last year and won a state bout. However, Woodward is now in Division II. Byrd was a district semi-finalist last year only to be defeated three times on Saturday and be left home. He has not wrestled recently for unknown reasons. The Toledo area trio of Rupert, Augustyniak, and Baker are certainly in the hunt. Rupert had two district wins last year including a huge upset of Holland. Each has had steady placements. Laird was 4th at Medina and placed at the Dies. In this chaotic environment his chances are about as good as anyone.

Matters also lack definition at Perry. If healthy, McCarthy is probably the best they have to offer. He was 13-0 and the Solon champ when he was injured the second week of the season. Whether he returns by sectionals and is ready to go is problematical. He was the district runner-up last year beating Meder among others. At Columbus he got decked by Prichard and then lost in overtime. Buzzelli also qualified after a 3rd place district finish (including a win over Meder) but went two and out at Columbus--including a loss to Williams. Still it was a great result for a freshman heavyweight at the Division I level. He has also had injury issues, and was 4th at Wadsworth (losing to Baker and Isham), but 1st at the Mayfield Big 8 as he rounded into shape. He'll get tougher by the week. Jones was 3rd at North Canton and 2nd at Medina after a 2-2 record at the district level last year. He, too, defeated Buzzelli early in the year. Pope and, maybe, Johnson are next best with Coher and Stocum lurking not far behind. It's hard to get a solid grasp on relative ranking as results change from week to week. Maybe, that is the reality for the rest of this season as well.

The Fairfield District has a nice portfolio of heavyweight wrestlers. Kline, as discussed, seems to be the best at this time. Carpenter is a great pinner, but seems inconsistent while Meyers keeps getting better. Klayman won at Norwood and Sycamore finishing ahead of Holcomb at the later 15-9. Beverly pinned Holcomb early in the year and deserves some consideration as well. Throw in an Isham, the Wadsworth champ, and Brading and this is probably the best and deepest district

If Prichard is at Darby as I have assumed for this report it will be he and Beatty for the title. Prichard, stocky and strong, may be a bad fit for Beatty--as he is for almost everyone. He was 8th last year and certainly could move up to the top step this time around. He won the GMVWA over Walls and strength doesn't get as nervous as finesse. Only four underclassmen were in the heavyweight bracket at Darby last year. I like McCasky and Williams as next best with an Oglesbee or Reinold in reserve. The long shots are Marrero and Caldwell (Marion Franklin) and their odds of qualification are little worse than those of all but Beatty and Prichard.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward They continue to extend their own records with eleven consecutive team titles and twenty-three overall. They are heavy favorites to make it an even dozen in a row, but there is a slight whiff of uncertainty in the air. The quintet of Sako, Clark, Sulzer, Palmer and Roddy look to be worth 110 points, but that may not be quite enough to lock it up. They'll need to get some points from Suba and Birt and hope that there is at least one more contributor.
2. Massillon Perry The finest public school program in Division I has done it again - - put a great team on the mat. The lightweights are sensational, but only Heflin and, maybe, Phillips will score after 130#. Still with maximum effort they might be able to squeeze out 120 points. That would at least catch St. Edward's attention. I have great confidence in White, Genetin, Horner, and Heflin, but Hannan, Hillock, and Phillips have to pitch in.
3. Moeller Many of their superstars have graduated, but they have some up-top power with Corrill, Harger, Gobin, and Quehl. They also have opportunities to score at a number of other weight classes with Wallander, Melink, Maserang, Hilton, etc.
4. Westerville North It's a three-man team, but what a trio. Dong and Kline should nail down 50 points and Demas - - well, you know what de did last year.
5. Mason A team with wrestlers with solid high placement opportunities - - Kline, DiFabritus, and Shepherd - - along with a solid group of possibilities. The Porters, Artrip, Yin, and Carey need to help. It will be interesting to see their lineup at sectionals.
6. Elder Two possible state champs in Scales and Pretty are worth a lot. If they can get real help from friends like Meyer, Gorrasi, Pope, and Hofmeyer they could challenge for 3rd.
7. St. Ignatius It's a three-man team, but Habat should be a finalist and a healthy Robinson gets you at least 15 points. The key is if Bryan can get 15-20 at 160#.

8. Uniontown Lake Mattingly, Cline and Lijoi have scoring chances, but it's the last two weight classes that are critical. If Rasho and Jones crank it up they could move up. If not, they won't make the Top Ten.
9. Kenmore A team with some real upside. Chapman, McCormick, the older Sheppard, and Lamberg are going to score. If they get help from May and the young Sheppard they could be a Top Five squad. The problem is getting out at that brutal district.
10. Mayfield Two sets of brothers are critical to Top Ten success. The D'Alessandros have to qualify because they can score at the state level, and the younger of the Hayes brothers needs to be super-healthy and ready. I think the only other real helper is Puskas.
11. Wadsworth They're still a year or two away from really lighting it up, but they have Top Ten chances. Squire is the only certainty for big points. But a healthy Buzzelli could really help at the weak heavyweight class, and then Foore, Randolph, and the Grays need to chip in.