

## Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read the *State Tournament Predictions Report*. As I embark on year number eleven – for which I have record – of doing this in some way, shape, or form ... let's take a quick look back at how the first ten years have went in predictions, as well as the current landscape in Ohio high school wrestling.

One of the first observations – at least to me – about this season in Ohio is, “where have the stars gone?” Well, there are two shining lights this year: Micah Jordan (St. Paris Graham) and Jacob Danishek (Dayton Christian). Both wrestlers are ranked among the best in the country at their weight classes, made their second Walsh Ironman finals this December, and earned the title in that prestigious tournament. Additionally, each wrestler will be after a fourth state title come Saturday, March 1.

However, in comparison to previous years, the top end talent behind those two wrestlers (on a national scale) seems to be lacking this year. As of the most recent national weight class rankings (InterMat on January 22), 22 wrestlers hold a national weight class ranking, but only four are in the top five of their respective weight classes. In the recent past, it seemed that more wrestlers were nationally ranked (about 25-30) and more were within the top five of their weight as well.

The analysis for why this is the case is beyond the scope of this report. However, it's not due to a lack of defending state champions. The number of defending and previous state champions in this year's state tournament series (18 defending, 21 if accounting for previous year titles) is pretty much in line with patterns of recent history. That number has been as low as 17 defending/previous champs in 2009/2013, and as high as 24 in 2010/2012.

Furthermore, it is not for the lack of excellent teams within the state of Ohio this year. The most recent national team rankings (InterMat on January 22) have five Ohio teams nationally ranked, which is very much in line with (if not higher than) previous years. There should be a very interesting team race within Division I (four teams in the hunt for the top two positions), the potential for a team race in Division III, and two teams with very impressive performances in Division II though no race is to be expected.

One of the obvious purposes for writing this report is to predict (hopefully correctly) who wins the state title in each of the 42 weight classes (14 in each of the three divisions). Let's see how that has played out over the last ten years.

2004- DI 8/14, DII 10/14, DIII 10/14 (TOTAL = 28)  
2005- DI 9/14, DII 9/14, DIII 3(or4)/14 (TOTAL = 21 or 22)  
2006- DI 10/14, DII 9/14, DIII 7(or8)/14 (TOTAL = 26 or 27)  
2007- DI 10/14, DII 8/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 27)  
2008- DI 9/14, DII 8/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 26)  
2009- DI 12/14, DII 9/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 30)  
2010- DI 9/14, DII 10/14, DIII 10(or11)/14 (TOTAL = 29 or 30)  
2011- DI 8(or9)/14, DII 8/14, DIII 11/14 (TOTAL = 27 or 28)  
2012- DI 11/14, DII 10/14, DIII 7(or8)/14 (TOTAL = 28 or 29)  
2013- DI 9/14, DII 9/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 27)

Where were the other champs ranked? (note this may not be perfect):

2<sup>nd</sup>- 71, 3<sup>rd</sup>- 35, 4<sup>th</sup>- 15, 5<sup>th</sup>- 10, 6<sup>th</sup>- 2, 7<sup>th</sup>- 3, 8<sup>th</sup>- 3, 9<sup>th</sup>- 1, >10- 3

Each weight class breakdown starts with an ordinal listing of the top 16 wrestlers. Following that ranking, is a listing of the top five (or more) wrestlers in each of the district tournaments, as one of the key points of interest heading into the post-season is who will qualify for the state tournament (four wrestlers in each of the four districts earn the distinction). Then, finally is the commentary, which provides an analysis of the weight class as a whole, the top wrestlers in the weight class, as well as some relevant and/or tangential commentary. After each weight class is presented in the division, a team ranking is presented based on a formula that is intended to replicate scoring at the state tournament.

In addition to being an attempt to accurately predict the champion (and those towards the top) of each weight class, there are two other primary objectives in the creation of this report: (1) an attempt to accurately gauge the composition of each district tournament weight class (2) to provide fans an informative, yet entertaining, read on what to expect in the state series over the next month.

Please note that this report is a reflection of the information acquired based on wrestling through the weekend ending January 18<sup>th</sup> updating done after the weekend of wrestling ending January 25<sup>th</sup>. There are two more weekends of wrestling left in this regular season, one of them being state dual meet championship Saturday. In addition, the state dual meet regional semifinals and finals happened after the major construction of the report; some of those results will be captured, others won't be.

Also, remember that come the state series, it is a new season. The rankings and summaries carry the value of understanding where one person sees things at this point in time, and also an entertainment factor. However, as the writer of this report, I feel it is important to state: (1) there are matches to be wrestled for a reason (2) it is the upsets, the unexpected, and the thrillers that define state series wrestling (3) if I was somewhat perfect, there would be a different line of employment for me (i.e. psychic or bookie).

These are two predictions that I guarantee to be correct:

\*The state tournament will be staged at Value City Arena on the campus of Ohio State University February 27<sup>th</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup>.

\*42 wrestlers will be crowned as champions, 14 weight classes across 3 divisions.

All others ... there are no guarantees. As the TMQ column on Page2 of ESPN.com states, "All predictions guaranteed to be wrong or your money back!" (just kidding)

Best of luck on the remainder of the season, hope you all achieve the levels of success you wish for, and enjoy the reading!