

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read the *State Tournament Predictions Report*. As I embark on year number sixteen – 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 fifteen years have went in predictions, as well as the current landscape in Ohio high school wrestling.

Unlike the previous three years, there is only one wrestler seeking to win their fourth state title at the upcoming state tournament. That would be Dylan D'Emilio (Genoa) in Division II. There are three additional Class of 2019 wrestlers seeking a third state title, Bryce Andonian (St. Edward) as well as Jacob and Jordan Decatur (CVCA).

Prior to 2016, 27 wrestlers in all had reached the state tournament with three state titles in hand, all 27 took home a fourth. However, in each of the last three years, there has been a wrestler seeking a fourth state title to be denied that feat at the state tournament. In 2016, Tyler Warner (Claymont) was upset in the state semifinal 6-4 at 120 pounds in Division II; in 2017, Kyle Lawson (Olentangy Liberty) lost a 3-2 decision in the quarterfinals at 160 pounds in Division I; while in 2018 Tommy Hoskins (Legacy Christian) was upset by Cole Mattin (Delta), losing a 4-2 overtime decision in the state semifinal at 126 pounds in Division III.

It should be noted that in 2016, Alex Marinelli (St. Paris Graham) did win his fourth state title; while in 2017, Kaleb Romero (Mechanicsburg) earned a fourth state title; and in 2018, David Carr (Massillon Perry) and Mitch Moore (St. Paris Graham) were successful in their quests to earn a fourth state title.

For a third straight year, there are multiple wrestlers seeking to win their fourth state title at the state tournament. On this occasion, the number is three, one in each division: David Carr (Massillon Perry) in Division I, Mitch Moore (St. Paris Graham) in Division II, and Tommy Hoskins (Legacy Christian Academy) in Division III.

Sixteen returning state champions are slated to compete in the state tournament series this year, a number that increases to 19 if you count for titles won in a year prior to 2018. In the last twelve years, the 16 defending state champions is joint third lowest (2011 also had 16, while 2009 and 2015 had 15 each); while the 19 defending and/or previous state champions is also joint third lowest (2009 had 17, 2013 had 8, 2011 and 2015 also had 19)

As of the rankings published on February 6th by InterMat, there are 26 Ohio wrestlers within the top 20 of their weight classes nationally. It includes at least one wrestler in 12 of the 14 weight classes, including each one from 106 through 182, while no wrestlers are ranked at either 195 or 220. Nine are ranked in the top five nationally, led by three ranked No. 1 at their respective weight classes: Jordan Decatur (CVCA) at 132, Connor Brady (Olentangy Liberty) at 160, and Carson Kharchla (Olentangy Liberty) at 170.

Unlike last year, two of the individual divisions actually have team title races present. Genoa is prohibitively favored to repeat as state champions in Division III, as they return six wrestlers that placed inside the top three at the state tournament last year as well as a seventh wrestler that placed at state in 2017. The only thing worth watching will be if the Comets can approach the Division III state meet points record of 162 set by Troy Christian in 2008.

While in Division II, St. Paris Graham will be seeking to extend their eighteen year streak of state titles another year, and make it a 21st individual tournament championship overall. Of interest is that the margin between first and second the last four years has been greater than 100 points, while only three time during Graham's streak the margin has been less than 40 (39 in 2001, 37.5 in 2002, and 38 in 2014). In addition, the two lowest point totals in this streak were 114.5 in 2001 and 139.5 in 2002. However, there will be a host of teams within contact of the Falcons this year, many of whom exit the Alliance district.

Division I features a clear two-team battle between St. Edward and Cincinnati LaSalle. The Eagles have won four consecutive individual state tournament titles, seven of eight, and 20 of the last 22. On the other hand, the last southwest district Division I team to finish as even state runner-up was Cincinnati Moeller in 2007. No southwest district team has won a state title in the big-school division or when the state tournament was single class, only four others even were runners-up (Xenia in 1986 Class AAA, Huber Hts. Wayne in 1999, then Cincinnati Moeller in 2000 and 2001).

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 thirteen 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)

2014- DI 9/14, DII 9/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 27)

2015- DI 5/14, DII 10/14, DIII 13/14 (TOTAL = 28)

2016- DI 7/14, DII 8/14, DIII 10/14 (TOTAL = 25); note: DI and DII each had one case where projected champ did not make weight at sectional, and the second-ranked kid won the title

2017 – DI 7/14, DII 10/14, DIII 9/14 (TOTAL = 26)

2018 – DI 9/14, DII 8/14, DIII 7/14 (TOTAL = 24)

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

2nd- 114, 3rd- 56, 4th- 21, 5th- 13, 6th- 5, 7th- 3, 8th- 3, 9th- 2, 10th- 2, >10- 4

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 at each of the district tournaments; note that four wrestlers at each district tournament site, of which there are four per division, earn state tournament qualification. 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

accurate 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 few weeks.

Please note that this report is a reflection of the information acquired based on wrestling through the weekend ending February 2nd, with publication done on February 8th, so the dual team state championship rounds are not captured. There is a week left of wrestling in the regular season, though it not one in which every team has a competition scheduled. It is also important to note the impact of the JakesWrestling database, without which a report of this meticulous nature could not be done.

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 March 7th through 9th.

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

All others ... I can make no guarantees. Best of luck on the remainder of the season, hope you all achieve the levels of success you wish for, and enjoy the reading!