

## **Division One – Rankings and Analysis**

### 106 pounds

1. David Bavery, Massillon Perry, sophomore (Mentor)
2. Armando Torres, Elyria, sophomore (Ashland)
3. Nick Mancini, Boardman, junior (Mentor)
4. Eddie Noble, Lebanon, senior (Fairfield)
5. Taleb Rahmani, Marysville, freshman (Hilliard Darby)
6. Payton Gutierrez, Pickerington North, junior (Hilliard Darby)
7. Austin Assad, Brecksville, freshman (Ashland)
8. Dakota Riley, Mount Vernon, junior (Hilliard Darby)
9. Luke Nace, Teays Valley, sophomore (Hilliard Darby)
10. LJ Bentley, St. Edward, freshman (Ashland)
11. Connor Ziegler, Moeller, freshman (Fairfield)
12. Jared Davis, Oregon Clay, sophomore (Ashland)
13. Josh Wimer, Grove City Central Crossing, sophomore (Hilliard Darby)
14. Josh Heidkamp, Vandalia Butler, junior (Fairfield)
15. Michael Irvine, Toledo St. Francis, sophomore (Ashland)
16. Jimmy Ferrito, St. Ignatius, junior (Mentor)

Ashland – Torres, Assad, Bentley, Davis, Irvine

Fairfield – E. Noble, C. Ziegler, Heidkamp, Brandon Tucker (Loveland, freshman), Patrick Kearney (Mason, freshman)

Hilliard Darby – Rahmani, Gutierrez, Riley, Nace, Wimer

Mentor – Bavery, Mancini, Ferrito, Colin Kramer (Mentor, junior), Jacob Steiner (Madison, junior)

Coming into the 2011-2012 season, returning state runner-up David Bavery was the prohibitive favorite in this weight class. Despite performances at the Ironman (failing to place) and Top Gun (finishing third, not winning) which have been below his standard, it still remains the case. Even though no one challenger has truly separated and/or made the case they can be counted on to potentially beat Bavery, the group is voluminous – as opposed to last year when it was Brandon Thompson (who won it), Bavery, and a collective who, what, and huh.

The bulk of that challenge packs comes from the Ashland and Hilliard Darby districts. Ranked second in this weight class, and leading the group at Ashland, is the sophomore Torres. He started the first half of last year with placements and Ironman and Brecksville, before seeing the season derail due to injury. None the less, Torres did make it to the district semifinals before bowing out. This year, it was a mixed bag – more so disappointment – at the Ironman prior to runner-up finishes at the Brecksville and Bill Dies tournaments. Next on the list is the freshman Austin Assad, whose season got off to a late start due to injury. Coming off a Cadet freestyle runner-up finish, Assad was the preseason ranked runner-up; however, his performance at the Dies did not suggest that to be the case. Do keep in mind that progress is highly likely as he transitions back from injury. Only four wrestlers can qualify to state, so if Torres and Assad occupy two of the spots; one of the freshman Bentley, returning state qualifier Davis, and the solid sophomore Irvine will be sitting in the stands at the Schott without a participant pass.

Life is also tough at the Hilliard Darby district in this weight. Mark this in your notebooks because this will be one of the few weight classes where that is the case. Things are so deep here that a returning state alternate (Andrew Torti, Olentangy) and Medina Invitational placer (Santino DiSabato, Westerville

North) are among those not listed. Strange as it seems, I think you could see someone bump to 113 here to increase their likelihood of state qualification. Leading the group here is freshman sensation Rahmani, who placed fourth at Brecksville and followed that up with wins at the Top Gun and Mason tournaments. Recently at the Mason tournament, he earned a decisive victory over returning state placer Gutierrez. Ranked second among wrestlers in this district, Gutierrez was champion at Solon and Pickerington North, before taking runner-up finishes at Medina and Mason.

After earning top three finishes in December events at 113 (2<sup>nd</sup> at Mt Vernon, 3<sup>rd</sup> at SWOWCA, and 1<sup>st</sup> at GMVWA), it was surprise to see Riley drop down to 106, but that's what he did in winning the Oregon Clay tournament recently. Also ranked at the Hilliard Darby district are Nace and Wimer; Nace was third at three tournaments already this year (Olentangy, Pickerington North, and Brecksville; while Wimer has finished top four at four tournaments (second at Olentangy and North Canton, fourth at Medina and Oregon Clay).

The sites at Mentor and Fairfield are thinner in terms of state-level talent, though the Mentor site has two of the top three rated wrestlers in Bavary and returning state qualifier Mancini. The lone wrestler with state experience at the Fairfield site is Eddie Noble, a senior who placed 8<sup>th</sup> at 103 pounds in 2010, and is probably the biggest kid in the weight class.

#### 113 pounds

1. Brandon Thompson, Solon, junior (Mentor)
2. Aaron Assad, Brecksville, junior (Ashland)
3. Alex Moore, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
4. Jacob Spearman, Lancaster, senior (Hilliard Darby)
5. Ryan Hornack, Medina, senior (Ashland)
6. Ruben Victoria/Jacob Artip, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
7. Tommy Zeigler, St. Ignatius, junior (Mentor)
8. Anthony Milano, LaSalle, junior (Fairfield)
9. Richie Screptock, Oregon Clay, freshman (Ashland)
10. Brendan Watson, Centerville, junior (Fairfield)
11. Evan Krumheuer, Midpark, senior (Ashland)
12. Chase DuPratt, Olmsted Falls, junior (Ashland)
13. Alex Cotton, Uniontown Lake, sophomore (Mentor)
14. Andy Fausnight, North Canton Hoover, junior (Mentor)
15. David Sparks, Marysville, sophomore (Hilliard Darby)
16. Joey Gallagher, Willoughby South, sophomore (Mentor)

Ashland – Moore, Assad, Hornack, Screptock, Krumheuer, DuPratt

Fairfield – Victoria, Milano, Watson, Grey Bearden (Fairfield, junior), Austin Daly (Lakota East, junior)

Hilliard Darby – Spearman, Sparks, Jon Bloss (Franklin Hts., senior), Greg Chang (Reynoldsburg, senior), Sam Valenti (Hilliard Darby, junior)

Mentor – Thompson, Zeigler, Cotton, Fausnight, Gallagher

Four wrestlers have separated themselves from the pack here in this weight class whose preseason favorite – Brandon Thompson – is still at the head of the class. Despite a somewhat disappointing fifth place finish at the Powerade, Thompson still has been excellent this year in winning at Solon and the North Coast Classic, and has a recent 4-3 win over a nationally ranked wrestler in Zac Hall (St. Johns, Michigan); two weeks after that, Hall took it to Moore in a 12-5 victory. He is the anchor figure in a

pretty balanced district at Mentor, where four other wrestlers – including returning state placer Zeigler – are battling for the three other spots.

Moore and Assad are the anchor figures at an insanely loaded Ashland district in this weight class. Six wrestlers are ranked in the top twelve, and the fifth and sixth rated wrestlers at this site placed in the state tournament last year. Unable to make the lineup the last two years due to Edgar Bright being in this weight class, Moore is seeking to make the most of his senior season. Competing at both 113 and 120, he will be here at 113 in the end game – where he seeks to build upon that Ironman fourth place finish and close out his career with a state title. Wrestling in Division III at Chanel the last two years, Assad finished third and second in the state. Moving over to Brecksville, he placed sixth at the Ironman and fourth at the Beast of the East prior to sustaining an unfortunate injury that has kept him out of the lineup until about now. It will be interesting to see how close to full form he is.

It is a quartet of very talented wrestlers gunning for those last two spots out of the Ashland district – three of them are state placers (Hornack, Krumheuer, and DuPratt), the other is the freshman Screptock who won the Brecksville tournament in late December.

Last in the group of four at the top of this weight is the senior Spearman who placed sixth at 103 last year but has been superlative this year at 113 with championships at the Hephner and Mount Vernon as well as a runner-up finish at Medina. He headlines what is a barren district, with only Sparks among the top sixteen. Three wrestlers listed in the district profile are gunning for those last two spots – state qualifier Bloss, state alternate Chang, and district placer Valenti.

While the Fairfield district only has three ranked wrestlers and lacks a top end contender, the group of five listed here is credible and credentialed. Listed first is whichever senior starts for Mason, between Medina placer Artip and returning state placer Victoria. Next is Milano, who went 2-2 in the district at 112 last year, but has been solid this year with a fourth place finish at the GMVWA (two wins over state qualifiers), a third place finish at the CIT, and most recently a title at Oregon Clay. The other three wrestlers listed here were state qualifiers last year – Watson winning a match at 103, while Bearden and Daly each went two-and-out.

### 120 pounds

1. George DiCamillo, St. Ignatius, senior (Mentor)
2. Ivan McClay, Massillon, junior (Mentor)
3. Max Byrd, Cincinnati LaSalle, senior (Fairfield)
4. Colin Heffernan, St. Edward, junior (Ashland)
5. Marcus Windsor, Huber Hts. Wayne, senior (Fairfield)
6. Mark Matos, Amherst, senior (Ashland)
7. Matt Canton, Elyria, senior (Ashland)
8. Josh Parrett, Kettering Fairmont, sophomore (Fairfield)
9. Sonny Shump, Barberton, junior (Mentor)
10. Jordan Puska, Trenton Edgewood, senior (Fairfield)
11. Zac Carson, Uniontown Lake, freshman (Mentor)
12. Tommy Pruchinski, Brecksville, senior (Ashland)
13. Tim Duran, Solon, senior (Mentor)
14. Andrew Mendel, Moeller, junior (Fairfield)
15. Giuseppe Penzone, Olentangy Liberty, sophomore (Hilliard Darby)
16. Alex Straughter, Reynoldsburg, senior (Hilliard Darby)

Ashland – Heffernan, Matos, Canon, Pruchinski, Matthias Zollinger (Wadsworth, junior)  
Fairfield – Byrd, Windsor, Parrett, Puska, Mendel  
Hilliard Darby – Penzone, Straughter, Ryan Lucas (Olentangy, senior), Chris Mullucey (Dublin Coffman, senior), Brad Kakos (Franklin Hts., junior)  
Mentor – DiCamillo, McClay, Shump, Carson, Duran

One of the virtuoso superstars of the state tournament is at the head of this weight class – the senior DiCamillo, who is seeking a repeat state championship this year, and has already won his third Ironman and fourth Brecksville titles during the course of the season. Not only that, he is also the number one wrestler in the nation at this weight class. When looking through the fourteen weight classes of Division I, he is one of the more decisive favorites.

The leading challenger will come out of his own Mentor district in the junior McClay, who placed third at the state last year, and gave DiCamillo a tight match in the district final. McClay placed third at the Ironman this year, but has to be careful in his weight management, as it bit him in the rear at the J.C. Gorman in early January; and he competed up a weight class at Oregon Clay recently, losing to Mike Screptock in overtime of the championship match. Behind that duo, the Mentor district features three other ranked wrestlers who are after the two spots.

Also here is returning state runner-up Byrd, who upended John Dillon in the semifinal last year before falling short to Dean Heil in the final. Byrd and McClay are very likely to meet in a quarterfinal or semifinal, the winner getting to face DiCamillo on Saturday night. This year Byrd has titles at the CIT and Oregon Clay to go with a third place finish at the GMVWA. Four other ranked wrestlers populate the district tournament at Fairfield gunning for three spots – this includes state qualifiers Windsor and Parrett, along with the senior Puska and a junior in returning state alternate Mendel.

When held in comparison to the previous two weights, and the following couple of weights, it is incredibly barren at the Ashland district – even with four wrestlers ranked in the top sixteen. Part of that in my opinion is the lack of overall quality in this weight on a statewide basis in Division I. Looking back to the weight below, one might want to assess if their chances of state aren't better here instead. Leading the pack here is Heffernan, who was a state alternate last year at 130 pounds, but is stuck down a weight class from where he should be due to the presence of Heil and Bright in the next two weights. Matos is a returning state qualifier, Canon is a senior who has found a way to make the finals at Brecksville and the Bill Dies this year (winning that one), while Pruchinski has yet to find that groove after making his debut at Brecksville though he did place fifth at the Bill Dies.

An absolute talent vacuum exists in the Hilliard Darby district at this weight class, though the ineligibility of Artem Timchenko (who returned to Olentangy Orange, where he placed at state as a freshman, after placing at state for Massillon Perry last year) really does not help the cause. The lone wrestlers ranked from this district are 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### 126 pounds

1. Dean Heil, St. Edward, junior (Ashland)
2. Cobey Fehr, Barberton, senior (Mentor)
3. Michael Screptock, Oregon Clay, senior (Ashland)
4. Ryan Murdock, Dublin Coffman, senior (Hilliard Darby)
5. AJ Kowal, Princeton, sophomore (Fairfield)

6. Tyler Ziegler, Moeller, senior (Fairfield)
7. Lee Wilson, Hilliard Davidson, junior (Hilliard Darby)
8. Michael Repko, Elyria, sophomore (Ashland)
9. Anthony Trunzo, North Royalton, senior (Mentor)
10. Brandon Jones, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
11. Nick Asadorian, Olmsted Falls, senior (Ashland)
12. Jake Donatelli, Hilliard Darby, junior (Hilliard Darby)
13. Jorge Gonzalez, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
14. Mike Decesare, Nordonia, sophomore (Ashland)
15. Sam Wakser, North Canton Hoover, senior (Mentor)
16. Dylan Good, Brecksville, senior (Ashland)

Ashland – Heil, M. Screptock, Repko, Jones, Asadorian, Decesare, Good

Fairfield – Kowal, Ziegler, Gonzalez, Ryan Huffman/Justin Kihn (Kettering Fairmont, senior), Cody Davis (Sidney, senior)

Hilliard Darby – Murdock, Wilson, Donatelli, Seth McCurdy (Delaware Hayes, senior), Justin Emmons (Canal Winchester, junior)

Mentor – Fehr, Trunzo, S. Wakser, T.J. Levitsky (Parma, junior), Nick Boggs (Painesville Riverside, sophomore)

Like the weight before, and with many weights to follow, there is a super-star wrestler and/or collection of pretty darn good wrestlers at the top of this weight class. In this case, it is the two-time state champion Heil, who was named Most Outstanding Wrestler at the Walsh Ironman in early December. At present, he is ranked No. 2 in the nation. While the group of four behind him is formidable, it's not one that should threaten.

One of those four wrestlers, Screptock, finished fourth in the state last year and joins Heil at the Ashland district. This year Screptock was a match from placing at the Ironman, second at Brecksville, and first at the Oregon Clay tournament. The group of five wrestlers listed here – along with others not listed (i.e. Johnny Spinkston of Lorain and Yassir Abdel-Salem of Lakewood) are targeting the last two qualification spots. Jones is already a two-time state qualifier, Asadorian placed third at Medina and was a Bill Dies runner-up, Decesare just made the drop from 132 (though looking at this climate I wonder why) after an excellent season there – third at Solon and second at North Coast and Kenston, the sophomore Repko has been in and out of the lineup, while 2010 state qualifier Good has been injured since the Ironman.

Unfortunately the John Dillon experience has taken one last turn, and it's one for the worse. The three-time state placer (third, fourth, and sixth) is academically ineligible and will not be able to get that elusive state title. As many have said, the biggest demon Dillon has faced in his career is himself – and that's the demon that bit last. Ranked second in this weight is 2010 state qualifier Fehr, who fell short of state last year in an absolutely loaded 119 pound weight class at the Mentor district.

This year, he has but one loss, to West Virginia three-time state champion David Jeffrey, and has titles at Brecksville and the Bill Dies to his credit. Two other wrestlers are listed in the rankings join Fehr at the Mentor district – Brecksville placer Trunzo, and Wakser, who has finished fourth at both North Canton and the Top Gun. However, the district in all is underwhelming at the weight class, especially when compared to its fellow northern district at Ashland.

Last in the challenge pack is three-time state qualifier and two-time state placer Murdock, who anchors things in the Hilliard Darby district, which features only two others in the rankings. This year, Murdock has a championship at the SWOWCA tournament and finished second at Medina. Also in the rankings are pair of juniors who, while very talented, have yet to make the state tournament – Wilson and Donateli.

Finally, it is the Fairfield district, which does not feature the favorite or a member of the four-person challenge group. Leading the way is the sophomore Kowal, a returning state qualifier, who was second at SWOWCA and fourth at the GMVWA. Next in line is returning state alternate Ziegler, who won three matches at the Ironman, was third at SWOWCA and the CIT, and has a pair of wins at the Clash against quality out of state opposition. Then, three wrestlers (one ranked, the others listed) seeking the last two spots – returning state qualifier Gonzalez as well as state alternates Huffman and Davis. Keep in mind that while Jordan Branham (Miamisburg) is ranked at 132, he has spent time in this weight class as well; if here, he would be third in this district with a “three for one” behind him.

### 132 pounds

1. Edgar Bright, St. Edward, junior (Ashland)
2. Joey Ward, Moeller, senior (Fairfield)
3. Kagan Squire, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
4. Trevor Fiorucci, Olentangy, senior (Hilliard Darby)
5. Nick Montgomery, Madison, junior (Mentor)
6. Matt Denlinger, Kettering Fairmont, junior (Fairfield)
7. Jacob Conine, Oregon Clay, senior (Ashland)
8. Jordan Victor, Mentor, senior (Mentor)
9. Drew McDougale, Gahanna Lincoln, junior (Hilliard Darby)
10. Isaac Bast, Massillon Perry, sophomore (Mentor)
11. Logan Strobe, Lancaster, senior (Hilliard Darby)
12. Jordan Branham, Miamisburg, junior (Fairfield)
13. Cole Nace, Teays Valley, senior (Hilliard Darby)
14. James Kunzler, Medina Highland, senior (Ashland)
15. William Abdel-Salem, Lakewood, senior (Ashland)

Ashland – Bright, Squire, Conine, Kunzler, W. Abdel-Salem

Fairfield – Ward, Denlinger, Branham, Austin Wesley (Loveland, sophomore), Justin Brown (Lakota East, junior)

Hilliard Darby – Fiorucci, D. McDougale, Strobe, C. Nace, Nick Hammond (Canal Winchester, freshman)

Mentor – Montgomery, Victor, Bast, Mitch Mickovic (Twinsburg, senior), Nick Steed (Glen Oak, freshman)

As earlier discussed in the lower-middleweight area, what once had been five weight classes now are four weight classes. This is one of the two weight classes that are truly a consolidation from the old weights, and the depth – both in terms of quality and quantity – reflects that. Six returning state placers are in this field, along with six other wrestlers that have made state tournaments previously.

In most years any of the top three wrestlers would be superb reflections of a Division I state champion. However, only one can win it. My pick here is the junior Bright, who has grown remarkably – both in jumping three weight classes and in his wrestling ability – from last year when he was a state runner-up. This year he has shown the ability to compete evenly, and beat, the nation’s best wrestlers. In fact, in

finishing second at the Ironman, Bright had a semifinal win over the now No. 1 wrestler in the nation, Alex Cisneros from California. Additionally, Bright has wins over the two other top wrestlers in this weight class – beating Ward 3-1 at state duals and Squire in the tiebreakers at the Ironman.

Joining Bright at the Ashland district is the just mentioned Squire, who has amazingly yet to win a state title. He has finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> at the state tournament – including last year when he was upset in the state final by Ward in the tiebreakers; Squire had won three earlier meetings against Ward. This year, after losing to Bright in the quarters at Ironman, he failed to place losing to Division II favorite Brent Fickel. He did bounce back to win at North Canton, but placed sixth at Brecksville after losing again in the semifinals to Fickel and then defaulting back.

In a normal year you might consider Conine – who also exits the Ashland district - to have an outside shot of at least the state final; however, this is not a normal year, and he's more likely to not place than hit the final in spite of being very talented. Already this year, Conine split matches with defending Division III state champion Jacob Danishek in finishing fourth at Brecksville, and he has a title at Oregon Clay. That leaves one spot remaining from the Ashland district for the three wrestlers ranked here, plus others not listed.

Bouncing back a moment to the lone wrestler to win a state title in this weight class, that would be to mention Ward, who anchors the Fairfield district. This season, Ward was fifth at the Ironman, undefeated at the Clash, and champion at SWOWCA and CIT. He has two wins over Division II favorite Fickel. This is another highly improved wrestler. From a bracketing perspective, he'll have to beat both Bright and Squire (in some order) to win state. Others present at the Fairfield district include SWOWCA runner-up Denlinger, a returning state placer; two-time state qualifier Branham, assuming he doesn't drop back to 126; and the last spot or two is ripe for the taking.

Rare is it that three-time state placers are irrelevant when it comes to the state title conversation. However, that is the case in this weight class with Fiorucci, who has been excellent this year with titles at Olentangy and Medina. He took second at North Canton, losing 3-0 to Squire; and was third at the Top Gun, blowing a 6-2 lead against Montgomery late in the second period of a 9-6 semifinal loss. The three wrestlers behind him at the Hilliard Darby district are close to one another in ability, and solid picks to be the other qualifiers to state. McDougle made state as a freshman in 2010; Strope made state as a freshman in 2009, but has been bounced in go-to-matches the last two years; while Nace did not even make the district tournament last year.

Finally, the field at Mentor is led by two-time state placer Montgomery, a junior who can score in bunches and/or get pins at anytime of the match. This year, he was champion at Riverside, Perry, and the Top Gun, as well as runner-up to Fickel at Brecksville. He has wins over Fiorucci, Victor, and McDougle. Victor is rated second in this weight, won a match at state last year, and was runner-up to Montgomery at the Top Gun. The sophomore Bast is a vastly improved wrestler this year, having placed third at Medina and fourth at the Top Gun; while the last qualifying spot is for the taking.

### 138 pounds

1. Mitch Newhouse, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
2. Nick Barber, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
3. Mike Labry, Twinsburg, senior (Mentor)
4. Noah Forrider, Marysville, junior (Hilliard Darby)
5. Jake Ryan, Olentangy Liberty, junior (Hilliard Darby)

6. Matt Hammer, Medina, senior (Ashland)
7. Angelo Amenta, Oregon Clay, senior (Ashland)
8. Michael Ratay, North Canton Hoover, senior (Mentor)
9. Eli Garcia, Lorain, junior (Ashland)
10. Adam Sams, Fairfield, junior (Fairfield)
11. Colin Taylor, Cuyahoga Falls, senior (Mentor)
12. Kyle McIntyre, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
13. Aaron Warstler, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
14. Dillon Ashton, Mentor, junior (Mentor)
15. Joe Boswell, Canal Winchester, senior (Hilliard Darby)
16. Zach Walker, Copley, senior (Ashland)

Ashland – Barber, Hammer, Amenta, Garcia, Warstler, Walker

Fairfield – Sams, McIntyre, Gage Asher (Hamilton, senior), Nick Bloch (Lakota West, senior), Caleb Whitcomb-Dixon (Sycamore, senior)

Hilliard Darby – Forrider, Ryan, Boswell, Kasee McDougle (Gahanna Lincoln, junior), Cody Pollitt (Olentangy, sophomore)

Mentor – Newhouse, Labry, Ratay, Taylor, D. Ashton

Wrestle this tournament on seven different weekends, and you might get seven different winners. That is how absolutely balanced this weight class is. While it is a sandwich weight between the “big three” at 132 and Anthony Collica at 145, the top group here is legitimate on their own merits. The pick here is 2010 state runner-up Newhouse, who has shown the highest ceiling of ability with a semifinal appearance at the Ironman (placed sixth); runner-up at the King of the Mountain, including a win over 2010 Pa. state champion Spearman; third place finishes at Medina and Top Gun; as well as a victory over Forrider at the state duals.

At the Mentor district, Newhouse is joined by another “super seven” member in three-time state qualifier, two-time state placer Labry. This year, Labry was champion at Solon (down at 132), Olentangy Liberty, and the Bill Dies; but finished third at Brecksville, losing in the semifinals to Ryan, whom he had beaten earlier in the year. These two wrestlers happen to be slated to wrestle together in college at Ashland University. Ratay placed as a freshman back in 2009 at CVCA, but failed to make state in either of the last two years, before returning home for his senior year. It has been an excellent year with a second at North Canton and a fourth at Medina. Three other state qualifiers reside in this weight class – Taylor, D. Ashton, and John Connick (Chardon, senior) – so it’s going to be a pain to get out to state. This past week, Taylor pulled off a surprising 6-0 victory over Hammer in dual meet action.

Three other members of the “super seven” exit from the Ashland University district tournament, so do two others with state experience, along with a district placer. That makes this a brutal district from which to qualify, and one in which “super seven” members Barber, Hammer, and Amenta need to be careful. Barber was moments and inches away from a state finals spot last year, losing 3-1 in the state semis on an electrifying scramble. This year, he placed fifth at the Ironman, splitting matches with Newhouse, along with beating Amenta; and has lost two very narrow matches against two-time National Prep champion Todd Preston, and a 3-2 match against Division II favorite Nate Skonieczny.

Hammer was a state semifinalist two years ago, losing a match in the tiebreaker that would have put him against Jamie Clark in the state final. Last year, he placed seventh in the state at 140. This year, he was champion at Medina with a quarterfinal victory over Newhouse, champion at the Hephner, and



fourth at the Top Gun suffering a loss to Newhouse. Amenta lost in the opening round at both the district and state tournaments on the way to a third place finish. This year, he was eighth at the Ironman, fourth at Brecksville (losses to Ryan and Labry), and blew an 8-4 lead in the championship match at Oregon Clay against Luke Kern. Others meriting attention at Ashland are state qualifiers Garcia and Warstler, as well as state alternate Walker.

The lone underclassmen in this super seven both exit the Hilliard Darby district. Both are juniors and met in the final at Brecksville, a match won by Forrider over Ryan in an ultimate tiebreaker rideout. This year, Ryan has split matches with Labry and has beaten Amenta twice. However, there is a paucity of depth at this district weight class, with only Boswell among those ranked. He won at Pickerington North, but has been out with injury since. Other seeking the last state spot (or spots) would be McDougale and Pollitt.

Finally, the Fairfield district is lacking in terms of top end talent and depth in this weight class. Returning state placer Sams, who was third at Fairfield losing 5-0 to Garcia, and two-time state qualifier McIntyre headline the group. There is a free-for-all for the last two spots here between those names listed, and a couple that weren't listed.

#### 145 pounds

1. Anthony Collica, Solon, junior (Mentor)
2. Markus Scheidel, St. Edward, junior (Ashland)
3. Zane Zeman, Avon, senior (Ashland)
4. Travis Luft, Teays Valley, senior (Hilliard Darby)
5. Ruben Burrows, Canton McKinley, senior (Mentor)
6. Mitch Baran, Brecksville, senior (Ashland)
7. Patrick Campbell, Anderson, senior (Fairfield)
8. Christian Baughman, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
9. Brian Brunner, North Olmsted, senior (Ashland)
10. Jake Neyer/Dylan Lauffer, Fairfield, senior/junior (Fairfield)
11. Tony Dailey, Massillon Perry, sophomore (Mentor)
12. Anthony Fosco, Olentangy, senior (Hilliard Darby)
13. Dean Meyer, Moeller, sophomore (Fairfield)
14. Aaron Thoman, Springboro, senior (Fairfield)
15. Aaron Banko, Garfield Hts, senior (Mentor)
16. J.P. Newton, Perrysburg, sophomore (Ashland)

Ashland – Zeman, Scheidel, Baran, Baughman, Brunner, Newton

Fairfield – Campbell, Neyer/Lauffer, Meyer, Thoman, Steve McPherson (Beavercreek, senior)

Hilliard Darby – Luft, Fosco, Chase Boyd (Marysville, junior), Hannibal Tate (Hilliard Davidson, sophomore), Connor Driscoll (Hilliard Bradley, senior)

Mentor – Collica, Burrows, T. Dailey, Banko, Lucas Marcelli (Massillon Jackson, junior)

After a one weight respite from having a state champion in the weight class, one is present here at 145. Collica was impressive in winning it last year as a sophomore, and has continued to show excellent form since – earning All-American honors in Junior National freestyle, and following it up with a solid season: titles at Solon and North Coast Classic, along with a fourth place finish at Powerade (going 1-2 against fellow nationally ranked wrestlers).

Seven other wrestlers in this weight class stood on the podium last year, including two that were second in the state – Burrows and Zeman. Burrows had been out until mid-January due to an injury sustained during football season, and he joins Collica at the Mentor district. The lone real result of note for Burrows this year was a loss by second period fall to Newhouse (Newhouse bumping up a weight). Though there are no other state qualifiers in this district, four others were one match from state last year, and are after the last two spots – state alternates Tony Dailey and Banko, and district sixth place finishers in Marcelli and Tyrone McGuinea (Twinsburg, senior).

Zeman was competing in Division II last year and finished second to the incomparable Bo Jordan, who is arguably the best wrestler nationally in the Class of 2013. He and Scheidel, who placed fifth at 125 pounds last year, anchor the Ashland district and are the two lead challengers to Collica. Even though Scheidel placed fifth at Ironman, and Zeman did not place, it was Zeman who beat Scheidel 3-1 on the front side of that bracket. However, Scheidel – a Cadet freestyle All-American – had a gigantic day this past Saturday with a 3-1 ultimate tiebreak victory over three-time Michigan state champion Alec Mooradian (who also won Medina this year), and bumping up a weight to pin state placer Travis Curley from St. Johns, Mich. The rest of the district is absolutely stacked in this weight class, with four others ranked (five total wrestlers in the top nine).

Two-time state qualifier Baran has championships at Brecksville and the Bill Dies this year, and would be favored to get a third state berth, and probably a first podium appearance in Columbus. Baughman and Brunner were state alternates last year; Baughman has split matches with Scheidel this year, including a victory at the state duals, while Brunner won the title at Kenston and made state in 2010. The sophomore Newton has impressed this year with medals at Medina, Perrysburg, and Oregon Clay. This does not include a pair of district sixth place finishers not even mentioned so far – Adam Feckley (Lakewood, senior) and Jacob Opial (Toledo Whitmer, senior).

But for a poor performance in the semifinal round at Brecksville, the senior Luft – a returning state placer – has been superlative this year. He has titles at Olentangy, Pickerington North, and Hilliard Bradley to go with the third place at Brecksville. Luft is the obvious anchor at the Hilliard Darby district, and is joined by just returning state placer Fosco in the rankings. However, the depth of this weight class on a statewide basis means that there are three formidable wrestlers mentioned after those last two spots – returning Division II state placer Driscoll, along with state alternates Boyd and Tate (though Tate was at Division III Bishop Ready last year).

Finally, the Fairfield district features a clear quartet of wrestlers that should earn state qualification. The senior Campbell won a match at state, and headlines the field in this district after a runner-up finish at SWOWCA and a championship at Fairfield. Fairfield has had two different wrestlers man the weight class this year – Neyer, a senior who won a match at state last year; and Lauffer, a junior who was a state alternate. Sophomore returning state placer Meyer has taken many losses on Moeller's rigorous schedule this year; however, he is not to be taken lightly, and is more than capable of turning things around. Thoman is a returning state qualifier.

#### 152 pounds

1. Zack Dailey, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
2. Chase Delande, Hilliard Davidson, senior (Hilliard Darby)
3. Dakota Sizemore, Moeller, sophomore (Fairfield)
4. Matt Van Curen, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
5. Warren Ashton, Mentor, senior (Mentor)

6. Andrew Barr, Brecksville, senior (Ashland)
7. Eoin Walden, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
8. Cody Gordon, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
9. Devan Price, Elyria, senior (Ashland)
10. Colin Rininger, Medina Highland, senior (Ashland)
11. Soren Iverson, Madison, senior (Mentor)
12. Derek Spangler, Sidney, senior (Fairfield)
13. Joe Heyob, St. Xavier, sophomore (Fairfield)
14. Latrell Davis, Middletown, junior (Fairfield)
15. Nick Lees, St. Ignatius, senior (Mentor)
16. C.J. Basinski, Amherst, senior (Ashland)

Ashland – Van Curen, Barr, Gordon, Price, Rininger, Basinski

Fairfield – Sizemore, Walden, Spangler, Heyob, Davis

Hilliard Darby – Delande, Jake Zoller (Hilliard Bradley, senior), Kyle Beatty/RJ Funk (Lancaster, senior/junior), Ason Sunkle (Pickerington Central, junior), Markell Wooden (Dublin Coffman, junior)

Mentor – Z. Dailey, W. Ashton, Iverson, Lees, Spencer Keeler (North Canton Hoover, senior)

This weight class has two very notable features: (1) two defending state champions are present (2) there is one district site that is a vacuum. Even though there are two defending champions, one is the clear favorite based on total career as well as preset year performance. The senior Dailey is a three-time state qualifier and two-time state placer. After placing in the 145 weight class at the Walsh Ironman, he has won championships in this weight at the King of the Mountain and Medina Invitational tournaments. In addition, when he finished runner-up at the Top Gun, he did not give up a takedown against Bo Jordan in the final, only allowing a near fall in the 2-0 result. Additionally, just this past weekend, Zach was the Outstanding Wrestler at the Delaware Hayes tournament for his 4-0 win over Delande in the final.

On the other hand, the other defending champion Delande did not start his wrestling season until early January coming off of football. He was an unexpected state champion in arguably one of the weakest middle-weight classes I can remember in recent Division I history. However, life will be very easy for him in the district tournament, as there are no other ranked wrestlers at Hilliard Darby.

The Ashland University district is yet again loaded in another weight class. Six of the ranked wrestlers will exit that site, including five of the top ten. There will be a few 152 pound wrestlers wondering, “Why do I not live within/around the I-270 outer-belt?” In fact, there is no wrestler at this site that I can peg as a sure fire state qualifier. The most talented wrestler at this district is Van Curen, but his match-to-match performances make Michigan State football look like a beacon of consistency. He made state as a freshman and sophomore, without winning a match. Last year, despite being a bona fide title contender, he won just one match at district. Other ranked wrestlers at Ashland include state qualifiers Rininger (won a match in Division II) and Price, state alternate Basinski, district placer Barr, and Gordon (who backed up state alternate Edwards).

Three other ranked wrestlers serve as the primary challengers to Dailey at the Mentor district. Returning state placer Ashton was champion at Solon, but surprisingly failed to place at Top Gun; Iverson won a match at state last year, and bounced back from failing to place at Brecksville with a fourth place finish at Top Gun; while Lees went 1-2 at district last year, but placed 8<sup>th</sup> at Brecksville and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the CIT.

Lastly, the Fairfield district is very solid in this weight class with five ranked wrestlers, and that does not include the Fairfield starter (either returning state qualifier Neyer or state alternate Lauffer). Leading the way in this district is Sizemore, who shown marked improvement in his sophomore campaign after making state but going 0-2 last year. It started with being named Outstanding Wrestler in the Community Division at the Disney Duals, and has continued into the season here he took fifth at the Ironman before winning titles at SWOWCA and the CIT. Walden has also made improvements from going 2-2 last year at the district into a season where he was 2<sup>nd</sup> at SWOWCA, 4<sup>th</sup> at Medina, and 1<sup>st</sup> at Mason. Returning state placer Spangler had a late start to the season due to injury, placing sixth at the Top Gun in mid-January upon his return; while Heyob and Davis each were 0-2 at state last year.

#### 160 pounds

1. Jacob Davis, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
2. Conner McMahon, Stow, senior (Mentor)
3. Tyler Hardtke, Elder, senior (Fairfield)
4. Nick Corba, Beavercreek, junior (Fairfield)
5. Roy Daniels, Olentangy Liberty, senior (Hilliard Darby)
6. Justin Kresevic, Solon, senior (Mentor)
7. Nico Graziani, Boardman, senior (Mentor)
8. Lazar Vilimonovic, Medina Highland, senior (Ashland)
9. Josh Arrendale, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
10. Quentin Hiles, Brecksville, junior (Ashland)
11. Rynell Roper, Euclid, senior (Mentor)
12. Tyler Miller, Marysville, senior (Hilliard Darby)
13. Andrew Globke, Middletown, senior (Fairfield)
14. Wyatt Wilson, Moeller, junior (Fairfield)
15. C.J. Edwards, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
16. Alex Mickley, Hilliard Davidson, senior (Hilliard Darby)

Ashland – Davis, Vilimonovic, Hiles, Edwards, Kadin Llewelyn (Perrysburg, sophomore)

Fairfield – Hardtke, Corba, A. Globke, Wilson, Kyle Schmidt (Miamisburg, sophomore)

Hilliard Darby – Daniels, T. Miller, Mickley, Ethan Bond (Lancaster, junior), Tyler McCourt (Dublin Coffman, senior)

Mentor – McMahon, Kresevic, Graziani, Arrendale, Roper

Like the 138 pound weight class, the dynamics here lean towards balance more than anchors, and there is also a lot of depth. The field includes six returning state placers, three state qualifiers (all of whom won a match), a former state qualifier, along with five other go-to-match losers (three state alternates). Two St. Edward wrestlers were projected as state champs in weight classes previous, with two others ranked second. That trend will really start to pick up as the back end of the lineup approaches. This is a team that could approach the record seven championships won by St. Paris Graham in 2009.

As one could tell from the previous paragraph, Davis is the favorite to win this weight class. Placing fifth at state last year in the 171 pound weight class, he is now in a more optimal weight class. The season started off for him well, placing sixth at the Ironman after reaching the semifinal round. He has come up with some key wins in big dual meets, most notably victories over formidable opponents from Apple Valley, Blair Academy, and St. Johns. Davis will anchor the Ashland district in one of its weaker weights with only four ranked wrestlers. Vilimonovic had a disappointing district tournament last year, but has bounced back nicely with a second at the North Coast Classic, third place finishes at North Canton and

Medina, and a fourth at the Bill Dies. Hiles is a returning state qualifier, who placed third at both Brecksville and the Bill Dies.

McMahon joins Davis as a returning fifth place finisher at state last year, accomplishing his at 145 pounds. He has also spent time at 152 pounds this year, where he won at Midpark. However, it is my guess he stays up at 160 pounds, where he was champion at Hudson and most recently at the Bill Dies. That choice is not a popular one with his colleagues at the Mentor district, where four other ranked wrestlers reside – and that does not include returning state qualifier Richard Robertson from Maple Hts, who I have projected will move up to the 170 pound weight class. It would not surprise me to see another kid or two bump up here.

Next in the rankings from the Mentor district is the senior Kresevic, who was a go-to-match loser in 2010, but was unable to compete last year due to football injury. He has bounced back nicely with titles at Solon and the North Coast Classic, before placing at the always tough Powerade. Graziani, 1-2 at the state last year, was champion at Kenston and third in a tough Top Gun field. Arrendale has failed to make state the last two years despite being projected to do so; this year, he was a match away from placing at the Ironman before taking fourth at both Medina and the Top Gun. Roper was 1-2 at the state last year and has titles at Riverside, Normandy, and Perry.

Similarly, the Fairfield district has solid depth and features a pair of state title contenders. Hardtke – fifth at state last year in this weight class – was champion at SWOWCA and CIT sandwiched around a third place finish at Brecksville. Corba, the highest returning placer in this weight class (fourth last year at 160), was runner-up at both SWOWCA and Medina. The three other wrestlers listed here are in play for the last two spots; Globke was a state alternate last year.

Finally, Daniels is the anchor wrestler at the Hilliard Darby district, and the fifth of the viable contenders for a state title. Coming in from New York, he has made a strong impression on the Buckeye State. With just one loss, he had titles at Olentangy Liberty (at 170), Brecksville, Marion County, and Wadsworth to his credit. He should be relatively unchallenged for the district crown with just two other ranked wrestlers, both outside the top ten, in this weight class; however, Miller was a surprise placer at state last year.

#### 170 pounds

1. Mark Martin, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
2. Vince Pickett, Grove City Central Crossing, senior (Hilliard Darby)
3. Tommy Kimbrell, Kettering Fairmont, senior (Fairfield)
4. Jonah Newburg, Northmont, senior (Fairfield)
5. Adam Kluk, Medina Highland, junior (Ashland)
6. Micahel Blum, Moeller, senior (Fairfield)
7. Richard Robertson, Maple Hts., junior (Mentor)
8. Christian Estes, Lakota West, senior (Fairfield)
9. Tyler Bowens, Hilliard Darby, senior (Hilliard Darby)
10. Zach Brown, Westerville Central, senior (Hilliard Darby)
11. Desmond Hall, Middletown, senior (Fairfield)
12. Connor Kamczyc, Elyria, sophomore (Ashland)
13. Tommy Danis, Mason, junior (Fairfield)
14. Eddie Silva, Oregon Clay, junior (Ashland)
15. Raemell Shepard, Garfield Hts., senior (Mentor)

16. Brian Fox, Dublin Scioto, senior (Hilliard Darby)

Ashland – Martin, Kluk, Kamczyc, Silva, Rocco Caywood (Maumee, sophomore)

Fairfield – Kimbrell, Newburg, Blum, Estes, Hall, Danis

Hilliard Darby – Pickett, Bowens, Brown, Fox, Funk/Beatty (Lancaster)

Mentor – Robertson, Shepard, Matt Olson (Kenston, senior) ... totally unsure

The Ohio State bound Martin is a defending state champ. It can be argued that he is the strongest favorite in all of Division I this year. Coming off that state title, he was a FILA Junior freestyle champion and Junior National freestyle All-American in Fargo this past off-season; and Martin won the Ironman in early December.

The most plausible challenge to Martin would come from Super32 placer Pickett, who was fourth in the state last year, and is undefeated this year but for a 5-3 loss to Cody Wiercioch (nationally ranked wrestler from Pa.) in the final at North Canton. Tournament titles on Pickett's resume this year include those at Olentangy, Medina, and Oregon Clay.

Pickett is the anchor wrestler at the Hilliard Darby district, which does have three additional ranked wrestlers. Bowens has made the state tournament twice, finished third at Medina and second at Pickerington North. Despite already having 150+ career wins, Brown has yet to make the state tournament (state alternate last year), and this year was runner-up at the Top Gun to Division II favorite Brandon O'Neill.

The deepest of the district tournaments is the one at Fairfield featuring six ranked wrestlers, including four of the top eight. Leading the way here are a pair of returning state placers from the Dayton area in Kimbrell and Newburg. The Stanford-bound Kimbrell has titles at SWOWCA and Brecksville this year, while the Kent State bound Newburg was champion at the GMVWA. Blum was 1-2 at the state tournament last year, and has placed sixth at the Ironman, 3<sup>rd</sup> at SWOWCA, and won the CIT this year. Estes is a returning state placer, and has runner-up finishes at Olentangy and SWOWCA to his credit, though he has not competed since. Those four are the most likely to make the state tournament.

At the Ashland district that Martin anchors, there are five ranked wrestlers; however, only Kluk is also positioned as a state placer. Kluk started the year at 182 where he was champion at the North Coast Classic and North Canton Hoover, before taking third at Medina; after dropping to 170, he won the Bill Dies. The other three ranked are seeking the two remaining spots along with a group of wrestlers just outside the rankings.

The district tournament at Mentor is totally vacant of key pieces. In fact, the current top rated wrestler in this district spent the first half of the year at 160 pounds – returning state qualifier Robertson. Quite frankly, it would not surprise me to see further movement into this weight class from above or (more likely) below.

#### 182 pounds

1. Domenic Abounader, St. Edward, junior (Ashland)
2. Michael Baker, Twinsburg, senior (Mentor)
3. Brandon Walker, Springboro, senior (Fairfield)
4. Gunner Lay, Loveland, sophomore (Fairfield)
5. Brocky Leidecker, Teays Valley, senior (Hilliard Darby)

6. Lane Louive, Massillon, senior (Mentor)
7. Mike Kohlhofer, Holland Springfield, senior (Ashland)
8. Luke Boff, Perrysburg, senior (Ashland)
9. Jake Suess, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
10. Alec Medina, Lorain, senior (Ashland)
11. Tegray Scales, Colerain, sophomore (Fairfield)
12. Isaiah Wheeler, Copley, senior (Ashland)
13. Connor Murray, Mayfield, senior (Mentor)
14. Matt Lybarger, Mount Vernon, sophomore (Hilliard Darby)
15. Korey Balog, Austintown Fitch, senior (Mentor)
16. Garrett Foster Pickerington Central, senior (Hilliard Darby)

Ashland – Abounader, Kohlhofer, Boff, Medina, Wheeler

Fairfield – Walker, Lay, Suess, Scales, Darrel Grayson (Springfield, senior)

Hilliard Darby – Leidecker, Lybarger, Foster, Austin Pfarr (Marysville, sophomore), Ricky McGrath (Hilliard Bradley, senior)

Mentor – Baker, Louive, Murray, Balog, Charlie Dear (Massillon Jackson, junior)

Like the 152 pound weight class, there are two returning state champions here at 182. This being a Division I upper-weight in 2012, it's time to select yet another projected champion from St. Edward. Abounader made state as a freshman, won a match but did not place; last year as a sophomore, he was a dominant state champion. This year, he's shown even more growth in finishing second at the Ironman, and then avenging that loss to Huston Evans just recently in dual meet competition. Abounader is one of the nation's best juniors, and he looks to make another statement by knocking off defending state champion Baker on Saturday, March 3 in Columbus.

Though none of the group at the Ashland district can truly push Abounader, it's going to be a battle of those other three qualifying spots. Returning state qualifiers Kohlhofer and Boff, each who won a match last year in Columbus, look to be good bets for two of those spots; which leaves one spot for the other two ranked wrestlers.

There's a similar dynamic in the Mentor district, where Baker is at the head of the class, returning state qualifier Louive (who won a match at state last year) is second best, and there's a group of three gunning for the last two spots. Baker has been rather impressive in his quest for back-to-back titles, with championships at Olentangy Liberty, Brecksville, and the Bill Dies. His lone loss was to West Virginia state champion Jared Haught due to multiple cautions while riding on top in the third period.

The first two wrestlers behind Abounader and Baker both reside at the Fairfield district. Walker placed fourth at state last year, but just made his season debut in mid-January. It is also an open question if he'll compete here (at 182), or go up in weight at 195. Walker is the favorite in neither weight, but his chances of poaching a state title would be slightly better at 195. The sophomore Lay has built upon his seventh place finish at state last year with a positive season featuring titles at SWOWCA and Fairfield sandwiched around a third place finish at Brecksville (semifinal loss to Baker). There are two (or three) open spots at Fairfield, and they'll go to wrestlers seeking a debut appearance in Columbus.

Last but not least is the Hilliard Darby district, which features just three ranked wrestlers. The clear favorite here is Leidecker, who is after a fourth state tournament appearance. Seeking that elusive podium spot, he has been solid this year with titles at Olentangy and Pickerington North prior to

finishing fourth at Brecksville. The other ranked wrestlers are district placer Lybarger, who is only a sophomore, and has been “hot and cold” this year; along with Foster, who went 2-2 at district last year. It’s open season for that other qualifying spot.

### 195 pounds

1. James Suvak, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
2. Joe Tayse, Massillon Perry, junior (Mentor)
3. Micah Carter, Perrysburg, senior (Ashland)
4. Garrett Conner, Centerville, junior (Fairfield)
5. Evan Rosborogh, Painesville Riverside, junior (Mentor)
6. Kylee Knabe, Loveland, senior (Fairfield)
7. Jerry Thornberry, Moeller, sophomore (Fairfield)
8. Devin Williams-Revels, Maple Hts, junior (Mentor)
9. Ted Schoen, Toledo St. John’s, senior (Ashland)
10. Aaron Tschantz, Barberton, junior (Mentor)
11. Ben Mather, Sycamore, senior (Fairfield)
12. Myles Campbell, Twisnburg, senior (Mentor)
13. James Lowery, Upper Arlington, senior (Hilliard Darby)
14. Jacob Burton, Lakota East, junior (Fairfield)
15. Adam Archacki, Normandy, junior (Mentor)
16. Kyle Conel, Ashtabula Lakeside, sophomore (Mentor)

Ashland – Suvak, Carter, Schoen, Josh Murphy (Brecksville, sophomore), Eddie Chavez (Fremont Ross, junior)

Fairfield – Conner, Knabe, Thornberry, Mather, Burton

Hilliard Darby – Lowery, Mike Mayberry (Worthington Kilbourne, senior), Thomas Taylor (Marysville, senior), Lenn’s Kamba (Olentangy Orange, sophomore), J.J. Chowoe (Pickerington Central, senior)

Mentor – Tayse, Rosborogh, Williams-Revels, Tschantz, Campbell, Archacki

Surprise, surprise – it’s an upper-weight, and the St. Edward wrestler is favored. Where have we seen that before? This year, it’s just about everywhere. It’s a two-man race at the top of this class between Suvak and Tayse. One might make the argument that there’s a rivalry; however, its tenor has been like that of the Michigan v Michigan State rivalry from the mid 2000’s. Big brother gets little brother every single time. Suvak is 5-0 against Tayse in the last two years, with all but one of the matches being rather tight, primarily driven by Suvak’s superior wrestling on the mat. They have met twice this year; Suvak winning 1-0 in the quarterfinals of the Ironman, keyed by a second period rideout, while it was a 7-4 Suvak victory in the third place match.

This season, Suvak was third at the Ironman and undefeated at the Clash. On the season, Tayse has two losses, both to Suvak, with championships at King of the Mountain, Medina, and Top Gun to his credit.

Suvak is the anchor wrestler at the Ashland district, where he is joined by ranked wrestlers Carter and Schoen, both of whom are seniors yet to make the state tournament. Carter was an alternate last year at 215 when he was victimized by the bracketing; but this year has been superb, finishing third at Medina followed up by titles at Perrysburg and Oregon Clay. Schoen has titles at Clinton Massie and the CIT (beating returning state placer Thornberry 7-6 in the final); with his only loss being to Mitch Sliga from Indiana, who is top ten in the nation. It’s open season for the fourth spot out, with the two wrestlers listed in the district breakdown leading that pack.



Tayse is the leader of a deep pack at the Mentor district, which includes five other ranked wrestlers. Rosborough has been excellent this year after surprising most by making it to state, and winning a match in Columbus, last year. He has titles at Solon and Riverside to go with a runner-up finish at the Top Gun and a fourth place finish at Medina. Williams-Revels has competed some at 220 early in the year (though it was a time share between him and state placer Patrick) until he could get down to 195 in the middle of January; he is a junior and returning state qualifier. The junior Tschantz was 2-2 at the district last year, and has been excellent this year, placing third at Brecksville and winning the Bill Dies. Also ranked are state alternate Campbell, and the junior Archacki who was a go-to-match loser as a freshman but injured before district last year.

The district at Fairfield has a similar quantity and quality of depth in this weight class. The junior Conner made state last year, won a match, and this year has excelled with titles at Olentangy and the GMVWA. Knabe, a senior, has been similarly impressive coming off a two-and-out run at state last year; he has titles at SWOWCA and Fairfield to go with a runner-up finish at Brecksville. Thornberry is the only returning state placer in this weight other than Suvak and Tayse, and placed sixth at the Ironman; however, he stumbled a bit in placing third at SWOWCA and second at the CIT. Mather, Burton, and Jarrod Hardrick (Huber Hts. Wayne, junior) are excellent wrestlers gunning for one state tournament spot. Keep in mind that you could see Brandon Walker, ranked third at 182, choose to compete in this weight class – he'd be ranked third here as well – and that would really load up this district.

On the other hand, the Hilliard Darby district is the polar opposite at this weight class – lacking in terms of an anchor wrestler, and in overall depth. State alternate Lowery is the lone ranked wrestler. Quite frankly it's anyone's ballgame for qualification at this site.

### 220 pounds

1. Ty Walz, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)
2. Chalmer Freauf, Moeller, sophomore (Fairfield)
3. Almonte Patrick, Maple Hts., senior (Mentor)
4. Josh Ransom, Madison, senior (Mentor)
5. Rahkim Johnson, Elder, senior (Fairfield)
6. Truman Gutapfel, Harrison, sophomore (Fairfield)
7. Devin Nye, Springfield, sophomore (Fairfield)
8. Alex Stinemetz, Olentangy, senior (Hilliard Darby)
9. Wes King, Dublin Scioto, senior (Hilliard Darby)
10. Vernon Rowe, Barberton, junior (Mentor)
11. Nick Isaacs, Cincinnati Withrow, junior (Fairfield)
12. Tinashe Bere, Sycamore, sophomore (Fairfield)
13. Nathan Martin, Vandalia Butler, junior (Fairfield)
14. Jake Cuenot, Glen Oak, senior (Mentor)
15. Tyler Sandy, Fairfield, senior (Fairfield)
16. Jake Venable, Hamilton, senior (Fairfield)

Ashland – Walz, Jared Gray (Oregon Clay, junior), Arshak Asriyan (Strongsville, senior), Justin McCarroll (Findlay, senior), Kyle Jenkins (Cloverleaf, senior)

Fairfield – Freauf, Johnson, Gutapfel, Nye, Isaacs, Bere, Martin, Sandy, Venable

Hilliard Darby – Stinemetz, King, Brett Mowery (Dublin Jerome, junior), Spencer Marshall (Lancaster), Alex Backenstoe (Hilliard Davidson, sophomore)

Mentor – Patrick, Ransom, Rowe, Jake Cuenot, Roy Ware (Cuyahoga Falls, sophomore)

Eight wrestlers return with state tournament experience, which is somewhat high for an upper-weight in the big-school division. Then again, that's a trend across big-school wrestling this year – it's a very veteran field. Leading the way here is returning state runner-up Walz from, you guessed it, St. Edward. Coming off an excellent off-season, runner-up finish at FILA Cadet Nationals in freestyle and an All-American finish at Junior Nationals in Fargo, one would think things would be smooth sailing with Tavanello (champion the last two years at 215) moving up to 285. However, Walz has been challenged by Freauf on two occasions – losing 4-3 in the consolation semis at the Ironman, and then beating him 6-4 on a late takedown at State Duals. One thing to watch for with Walz against the better competition is his tendency to dominate the situations in terms of attacks, but being unable to finish it for points. That loss to Freauf at the Ironman dropped him to a fifth place finish, but he bounced back with an undefeated tournament at the Clash and being named to the all-tournament team.

Fourth in the state as a freshman, Freauf is the primary challenger to Walz this year, but that second spot is not without a strong group of challengers. First and foremost, Freauf has to watch out at the Fairfield district, which is absolutely loaded in this weight with eight others among the top sixteen. That list does not include Daniele Teldodi (Mason), sixth at the district last year, who has spent some time in this weight class; but I think it behooves him to go back up to 285. Heck, it may behoove some others to explore that option in this district. After the fourth place finish at Ironman, with losses to Kyle Snyder (a fellow sophomore from Maryland, who is ranked second nationally) and Matt Meadows (favorite in Division II); he placed third at SWOWCA, went undefeated at the Clash, and was champion at CIT.

Also at Fairfield is returning state placer Johnson, a district champion last year; who won the SWOWCA tournament, was second at Brecksville, and third at the CIT (losing 2-1 to Freauf in the semis). Like Freauf, Gutapfel is a very talented sophomore; he won just one match at district last year, but this year has a win over Freauf at SWOWCA (finished second to Johnson there) and was champion at Fairfield. Yet another sophomore is Nye, sixth at district last year, who won the GMVWA title. The other five ranked wrestlers – all of whom could make noise at state (if they got there): Isaacs, a junior who just beat Bere in the Milford final; Bere, yet another sophomore, who was fourth at SWOWCA and second at Fairfield; state qualifier Martin, who was runner-up to Nye at GMVWA; along with Sandy and Venable.

Another pair of solid contenders at this weight class come from the Mentor district in state placer Patrick, who made the semis but dropped down to sixth, and state qualifier Ransom. Patrick was champion at Hudson, and just majored Ransom 10-0 in a dual this past Friday. Ransom won tournaments at Riverside and Brecksville, with a runner-up finish at Top Gun to Meadows giving up two takedowns in the last minute to lose. Rowe, a junior who placed sixth at district, has been excellent this year as well placing fourth at Brecksville along with a title at the Bill Dies. Cuenot is the other pick for state qualification having four top three tournament finishes this year.

Walz will go unchallenged at the Ashland district, as there are no other ranked wrestlers at this site. I like Gray, who placed seventh at Brecksville and second at Oregon Clay as a solid bet to take a spot, with the other two being pretty open.

Finally, the Hilliard Darby district does feature a pair of returning state qualifiers in Stinemetz and King; however, neither won a match at state last year. This year, Stinemetz has three wins over King, and has top four standings in all four tournaments this year (1<sup>st</sup> at Olentangy, 2<sup>nd</sup> at North Canton, and 4<sup>th</sup> at

Medina and Top Gun). Mowery has spent some time at 285 this year, but it would behoove him to get here, as the path to state is much easier. Then it's all bets off on the last spot or two.

### 285 pounds

1. Nick Tavanello, Wadsworth, senior (Ashland)
2. Patrick Elflein, Pickerington North, senior (Hilliard Darby)
3. Luke Fleming, Olentangy Liberty, senior (Hilliard Darby)
4. Garrett Gray, Oregon Clay, senior (Ashland)
5. Derek Everett, Glen Oak, senior (Mentor)
6. Aaron Pipkins, Maple Hts, senior (Mentor)
7. Bryan Young, Olentangy, senior (Hilliard Darby)
8. Vincent Morgan, John Adams, senior (Mentor)
9. Kyle Thirkield, Marysville, senior (Hilliard Darby)
10. Tim Bowman, Lakota East, senior (Fairfield)
11. John Niehaus, Colerain, senior (Fairfield)
12. Tim Reagan, Brunswick, senior (Ashland)
13. Charles Morgan, Ashtabula Lakeside, junior (Mentor)
14. Brady Vanover, Kings, junior (Fairfield)
15. Daniele Teldodi, Mason, senior (Fairfield)
16. Joe Belford, St. Edward, senior (Ashland)

Ashland – Tavanello, G. Gray, Reagan, Belford, Sam Burns (Toledo St. Francis, junior)

Fairfield – Bowman, Niehaus, Vaover, Teldodi, Eric Lalley (Moeller, senior)

Hilliard Darby – Elflein, Fleming, Young, Thirkield, Kevin Miller (Lancaster, senior)

Mentor – Everett, Pipkins, V. Morgan, C. Morgan, Andrew Thomas (Brush, senior)

Big school heavyweight tends to be very cyclical in terms of proven depth. Some years, there's a ton of it; other years, there's next to nothing. This is one of those years that would have had beaucoup depth; however, injuries and/or football have knocked four returning state placers from the consideration – Greg Kuhar, Nick Nusekabel, Doug Mayes, and Nate Hoff (wrestlers that finished second through fifth last year at this weight class). None the less, a pair of state placers returns, along with six others that have state tournament experience.

Twice a state champion at 215 pounds, the Ohio State bound Tavanello made the move up to 285 this year, and it's not been without challenges. Coming off of a regional final in football, Tavanello did not compete in the Ironman. In his season debut at North Canton, he lost a 3-1 decision to Pa. state placer Cody Klempay (who is nationally ranked) 3-1 on a late takedown. He did bounce back to win the Brecksville tournament, but he had a tight finals match, beating Fleming 1-0 on a third period escape after second period rideout. The other returning state placer in this weight joins Tavanello at the Ashland district. This year, Garrett Gray has placed fifth at the Ironman, third at Brecksville, and first at Oregon Clay. There is a significant drop in terms of the last two qualifying spots.

The other two members of the top four exits from the Hilliard Darby district, and each won one match at the state tournament last year. Like Tavanello, Elflein is Ohio State bound; however, he's going to be an offensive lineman for the football team. This season, he is undefeated with tournament titles at Solon, Pickerington North, and Medina. Fleming was runner-up to Tavanello at Brecksville with a win over Gray in the semis and won the title at Olentangy Liberty. The other two projected qualifiers have experience in Columbus – Young and Thirkield, and they have met many times over the last few years. Young was

champion at Olentangy and third at Medina and Top Gun; Thirkield was fifth at Brecksville and second at Top Gun.

The other two wrestlers with state tournament experience come from the Mentor district. Everett won a match at state last year, was second at Solon losing in the ultimate titebreak to Elflein, won at Smithville, and took third at the Bill Dies. Vincent Morgan is just now making his debut to the mats after going 0-2 at state, taking his time in recovering from a football injury and getting down to the weight limit. District placer Pipkins and Kenston champion Charles Morgan round out the projected qualifiers.

Life at the Fairfield district in this weight is a total crapshoot. There are no projected state placers in the lot, but qualifying for state is wide open between the four ranked, five listed here, and some others. In addition, you might see further movement up from 220 given the logjam there.

Team projection: St. Edward is the prohibitive favorites to win. The rankings will be posted when the formula calculation is geerated.