

Introduction

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

For the first time since 2007, there will be no wrestler seeking to win their fourth state title in this year's state tournament. Among this year's senior class, there are a pair of wrestlers that have already appeared in three state finals: Cameron Kelly (Bellbrook), a 2012 state champion, and two-time defending state champion Jarred Ganger (Covington). However, the wrestler who has emerged as the best talent in the Class of 2015 is Kollin Moore (Norwayne), a two-time Division II state runner-up, who is after an elusive state title at 182 pounds. The future Ohio State Buckeye has been on fire this campaign, starting with a Super 32 Challenge runner-up finish ten days after his high school soccer season ended. Moore is undefeated on the season, and has been totally dominant.

The best wrestler in the state this season is a junior, Alex Marinelli (St. Paris Graham). The two-time state champion won the Walsh Jesuit Ironman in December, and is currently ranked number one nationally at 160 pounds. Joining Marinelli as a potential four-time state champion in the Class of 2016 is Tyler Warner (Claymont). In addition, there are many excellent underclassmen – among them is sophomore Kevin Vough (Elyria), who won the Walsh Ironman at 285 pounds.

There are just 14 defending state champions, which increases to 18 if accounting for previous year state titles. This is in the lower end of the range for recent years (2014 had 21 defending/previous champs, 2013 had 17, 2012 had 24).

Even if the top end individual talent is not overwhelming this year – only three individuals ranked among the top five in their weight class nationally from the InterMat rankings as of February 11th – the team talent is extremely impressive. The most recent national team rankings have seven Ohio teams ranked within the top fifty – four in Division I, just St. Paris Graham in Division II, and a pair in Division III.

The team race to watch – on and off the mat over the next month – will be in Division III between Fab50 members Delta and Dayton Christian. In Division II, St. Paris Graham is prohibitively favored to win its 15th straight state title in the individual tournament. The landscape in Division I has the potential to be rather wide open; however, St. Edward has the highest ceiling, as their depth is such that an "on" tournament (series) creates a semi-clean state title. Massillon Perry, should Phillips be able to compete, presents the strongest challenge to the Eagles; while three to five other teams could be in the hunt for either the championship or runner-up trophies.

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

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

2nd- 78, 3rd- 39, 4th- 19, 5th- 10, 6th- 2, 7th- 3, 8th- 3, 9th- 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 February 7th updating done after the weekend of wrestling ending February 14th (notably the state dual meet tournament). There is one more weekend left of wrestling in the regular season, with some conference tournaments populating the calendar. Given the timing of this report, results from the state duals of the past weekend may or may not be captured in the ordinal rankings and/or commentary.

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 12th through March 14th.

*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!

District Tournament Site Analysis

With this being the second year of the enrollment cycle, there are very limited changes to the district compositions.

Division I still had an all Northeast district (4 sectionals), a mixed Northeast (2 sectionals) and Northwest (2 sectionals) district, an all Central district (4 sectionals), and an all-Southwest district (4 sectionals). Division II still features an all Northeast district (4 sectionals); a mixed district held in the Northwest (2 all northwest sectionals, one mixed northwest/northeast sectional, and one southwest sectional); a mixed district in the Southwest (2 all southwest sectionals, one mixed southwest/southeast sectional, and one southeast sectional); and a combined Central (2 sectionals) and East (2 sectionals) district. Division III still features an all Northeast district (4 sectionals), an all Northwest district (4 sectionals), a mixed Southwest (3 sectionals) and Northwest (1 sectional) district, and a mixed Central/East/Southeast district (1-2-1 for sectional distribution).

The only possible exception on a broad basis is in Division II, where again two of the southwest district sectionals will have an allocation process to determine which schools feed to the Northwest district, and which feed to the Southwest district (11 each). Based on last year, the general pattern is that most of the better teams will choose to stay in the Southwest district, as the existing teams in that district are weaker than those in the Northwest.

An additional note in Division I is that perennial power program Brecksville is now in the all-Northeast district instead of the mixed Northwest/Northeast district.

When looking at the below district tournament statistics, keep in mind that each site should have the following marks from an expected value standpoint: overall record of 105-105, with a 52.5-52.5 mark in championship bracket matches, and 14 wrestlers going two-and-out. Below are four years of records for each district at the state tournament.

DIV I - All Northeast (Mentor)

2014: 107-99, 51.9% (overall); 61-50, 55.0% (championship only); 19 (two-and-out)

2013: 120-101, 54.3%; 67-51, 56.8%; 10

2012: 120-96, 55.6%; 71-49, 59.2%; 10

2011: 137-102, 57.3%; 72-51, 58.5%; 7

DIV I - Combined Northeast (2)/Northwest (2) < Cleveland State University>

2014: 142-98, 59.2% (overall); 57-53, 51.8% (championship only); 7 (two-and-out)

2013: 119-100, 54.3%; 62-52, 54.4%; 9

2012: 122-94, 56.5%; 65-51, 56.0%; 13

2011: 127-96, 57.0%; 76-51, 59.8%; 7

Note – The combined Northeast/Northwest configuration is the same, as it has been for the previous four years presented here. The Wadsworth (formerly Medina) sectional is joined by the Westlake (formerly Lorain) sectional in going to the combined district; while sectionals at Massillon Perry, Willoughby South, Austintown Fitch, and North Royalton form the all Northeast district

DIV I - All Southwest (now Kettering Fairmont)

Note: This used to be only four of the five sectionals, this year and the three previous years all schools consolidated into four sectionals

2014: 83-110, 43.0% (overall); 50-54, 48.1% (championship only); 16 (two-and-out)

2013: 91-111, 45.0%; 41-53, 43.6%; 19

2012: 99-117, 45.8%; 42-55, 43.3%; 9

2011: 86-108, 44.3%; 30-55, 35.3%; 21

DIV I - All Central (Hilliard Darby)

Note: This used to be three central sectionals with one southwest sectional, this year and the three previous years what had been three sectionals is stretched into four sectionals

2014: 88-113, 43.8% (overall); 42-53, 44.2% (championship only); 14 (two-and-out)

2013: 90-108, 45.5%; 40-54, 42.6%; 18

2012: 79-113, 41.1%; 32-55, 36.8%; 24

2011: 70-114, 38.0%; 32-53, 37.6%; 21

DIV II - All Northeast (Alliance)

2014: 124-103, 54.6% (overall); 60-52, 53.6% (championship only); 10 (two-and-out)

2013: 131-105, 55.5%; 63-51, 55.3%; 9

2012: 122-107, 53.3%; 54-53, 50.5%; 9

2011: 110-105, 51.2%; 62-52, 54.4%; 12

DIV II - Combined Central (2)/East (2) <now Heath>

2014: 91-108, 45.7% (overall); 45-53, 45.9% (championship only); 16 (two-and-out)

2013: 80-108, 42.6%; 37-55, 40.2%; 19

2012: 88-112, 44.0%; 41-56, 42.3%; 16

2011: 95-118, 44.6%; 37-56, 39.8%; 16

DIV II – primary Northwest district (now Mansfield)

2014: 93-109, (overall); 53-53, 50.0% (championship only); 16 (two-and-out)

2013: 107-102, 51.2%; 57-52, 52.3%; 15

2012: 134-89, 60.0%; 87-48, 64.4%; 9

2011: 120-103, 53.8%; 54-55, 49.5%; 9

NOTE: 2011 had 3 NW sectionals, 1 NE sectional; 2012 had 2 NW sectional, 1 NE (some NW) sectional, 1 SW sectional (northern-most, included St. Paris Graham, et al); 2013 and 2014 had 2 NW sectional, 1 NE (some NW) sectional, 1 SW sectional (teams chose whether to attend NW or SW district)

DIV II – primary Southwest district (now Chillicothe Southeastern)

2014: 112-100, 52.8% (overall); 52-52, 50.0% (championship only); 14 (two-and-out)

2013: 102-105, 49.3%; 53-52, 50.5%; 13

2012: 76-112, 40.4%; 28-53, 34.6%; 22

2011: 95-94, 50.3%; 57-47, 54.8%; 19

NOTE: 2011 had 3 SW sectionals (one with some SE), 1 SE sectional; 2012 had 2 SW sectionals, 1 all SE sectional, 1 SE (with some SW) sectional; 2013 and 2014 had 2 SW sectionals (one of which was a sectional involving teams with a choice between NW or SW district), 1 all SE sectional, 1 SE (with some SW) sectional

DIV III - All Northeast (Garfield Hts)

2014: 104-100, 51.0% (overall); 59-50, 54.1% (championship only); 12 (two-and-out)

2013: 117-103, 53.2%; 59-51, 53.6%; 10

2012: 128-104, 55.2%; 57-53, 51.8%; 8

2011: 132-102, 56.4%; 66-52, 55.9%; 9

DIV III - Combined Central (1)/East (2)/Southeast (1) <now Coshocton>

2014: 68-118, 36.6% (overall); 31-56, 35.6% (championship only); 19 (two-and-out)

2013: 104-109, 48.8%; 49-52, 48.5%; 13

2012: 84-110, 43.3%; 40-54, 42.6%; 18

2011: 77-113, 40.5%; 39-55, 41.5%; 19

DIV III - Combined Southwest (3)/Northwest (1) <now Troy>

Note: for 2011, it was a 2+2; the previous three years, it has the present composition. In 2011, there was two southwest sectionals, for the last three years those same teams are in three sectionals

2014: 117-97, 54.7% (overall); 64-48, 57.1% (championship only); 14 (two-and-out)

2013: 109-100, 52.2%; 58-52, 52.7%; 18

2012: 99-99, 50.0%; 58-51, 53.2%; 15

2011: 103-104, 49.8%; 46-53, 46.5%; 14

DIV III - All Northwest (now Fostoria)

Note: For 2011, it was four of the six northwest sectionals at this site; while the last three years, it was four of the five northwest sectionals present here

2014: 129-105, 55.1% (overall); 55-55, 50.0% (championship only); (two-and-out)

2013: 90-108, 45.5%; 44-55, 44.4%; 15

2012: 109-107, 50.5%; 55-52, 51.4%; 15

2011: 108-101, 51.7%; 59-50, 54.1%; 14

Division I

106 pounds

1. Zack Donathan, Mason, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
2. Devione Edwards, Lorain, junior (Cleveland State)
3. Jarrod Bronstrup, Brecksville, junior (Mentor)
4. Anthony Jagel, Middletown, senior (K. Fairmont)
5. Brandon Randolph, Wadsworth, sophomore (Cleveland State)
6. Josh Breeding, Elyria, freshman (Cleveland State)
7. Matt Kazimir, St. Edward, freshman (Cleveland State)
8. Chad Craft, Northmont, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
9. Zac McCauley, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
10. Brakan Mead, Olentangy Liberty, sophomore (H. Darby)
11. Seth Transue, Dublin Jerome, junior (H. Darby)
12. Coleton Chase, Lancaster, junior (H. Darby)
13. Matt Fields, Brunswick, freshman (Cleveland State)
14. Zachary Shupp, Fairfield, freshman (K. Fairmont)
15. Corbin Post, Madison, senior (Mentor)
16. Gio DiSabato, Hilliard Davidson, freshman (H. Darby)
17. Jordin James, Bedford, sophomore (Mentor)

CSU – Edwards, Randolph, Breeding, Kazimir; Fields, Lamonte Chapman (Fremont Ross, freshman)

HD – Mead, Transue, Chase, DiSabato; Devin Johnson (Pickerington Central, senior)

KF – Donathan, Jagel, Craft, Shupp; Cory Baird (Harrison, sophomore)

MEN – Bronstrup, McCauley, Post, James; Quade Rasmussen (St. Ignatius, sophomore)

Even though many view the opening weight as a bastion for freshmen, just one has won the big-school state title in this weight class (be it 103 or 106) in the nine years prior to this one. Dean Heil of St. Edward won in 2010 on the way to becoming a four-time state champion. If a freshman was to buck the trend, and ascend to the top of the podium, it would be somewhat of a surprise.

The three lead figures in this weight class all placed here last year at the state tournament. Though the sophomore Donathan was the lowest placer of them, finishing sixth, he enters the state series as the favorite. His lone loss this year was 5-0 to Division III favorite Mattin during the opening weekend, and his signature win was 8-2 over projected Illinois big-school state champion Kirk Johansen in the Dvorak final right before Christmas. His other competitions this year have come at 113 to accommodate a teammate, titles at Olentangy Liberty, Mason, Groveport Madison, and the GMC meet; notable in that are three decisive wins against projected state placers.

Four of the next six in the rankings will all exit the district at Cleveland State, along with a fifth ranked wrestler, which makes this the toughest district in the weight class. Leading that ladder is the highest returning state placer, the junior Edwards from Lorain. Placing third last year at state, he started the season at 113, where he failed to place at the Ironman before taking third at Medina. Edwards went 0-3 in matches against the top two ranked Division I 113 pound wrestlers before dropping. After his drop, he was upset 4-2 by the freshman Breeding in early February.

Breeding is one of the others in this Cleveland State district, and will also be at the Westlake sectional along with Edwards and Kazimir. This season, Breeding went 3-2 at the Ironman before taking third at

Brecksville, fifth at the Bill Dies, and winning the NOC title. Kazimir has results that suggest he could be in the hunt for the title, while others lean more towards mid-to-low placement; such is the nature of being a highly talented, but undersized wrestler. He beat Breeding 2-0 in the state dual semifinals, beat projected Division II champ Stickley in a January dual meet; but went 2-2 at the Ironman and placed fifth at Medina (including a 4-3 semifinal loss to McCauley).

Also ranked here is fellow freshman Fields, who won titles at Solon and the North Classic before going just 2-2 at Medina and finishing third at the NOC meet. The real wild card in this district is Randolph, last year a state alternate at 113, who still needs to make scratch in this weight class; though he competed here in the pre-season Super 32 Challenge, where he was one match from making the second day.

The other returning state placer is the junior Bronstrup, who took fifth at the state tournament last year. He spent the bulk of the season at 113 pounds, where he was a combined 4-4 at the Ironman and Beast of the East, fifth at Brecksville, and champion at the Bill Dies. He dropped to 106 during the state duals series, and had a pair of wins over ranked contenders in the state semifinal and final; 4-2 over McCauley, and 5-2 over Kazimir. Three other wrestlers join him as ranked at Mentor, led by the senior McCauley, who was fifth at the Beast, runner-up at Medina and Delaware Hayes, and third at Top Gun; he also has a win over projected Division III 113 champ Hoskins at the Ironman (when up at 113). Fellow senior Post is a returning state qualifier, who placed at Brecksville and the Bill Dies in this weight class; while the sophomore James was champion at Aurora.

Circling back to Kettering Fairmont where Donathan is the anchor, there are three other ranked wrestlers, including a pair with state experience. The senior Jagel qualified for state in 2013 before missing last year's state series with an injury; this year he was champion at SWOWCA and Eaton at 113, while winning Fairfield and taking second at Top Gun in this weight class. The sophomore Craft went two-and-out at state last year, and has titles in three tournaments this year along with a runner-up finish at GMVWA; while the freshman Shupp was champion at SWOWCA and Kenston before taking second to Jagel at Fairfield.

Rounding it out is the Hilliard Darby district, which features four ranked wrestlers led by the sophomore Mead, who was champion at Olentangy, fourth at Brecksville, and runner-up at Wadsworth. Next on the ladder is returning state alternate Transue, runner-up at North Canton and New Lexington, with titles at Mt. Vernon and Marion Harding. The junior Chase split matches with Brooks in finishing fourth at Medina, was second at Olentangy Liberty and the Hephner, and beat DiSabato to win at Olentangy. Lastly here is the freshman DiSabato, who was second at Olentangy, but pinned McCauley in the final at Delaware Hayes.

113 pounds

1. Noah Baughman, Wadsworth, junior (Cleveland State)
2. Jaden Mattox, Central Crossing, freshman (H. Darby)
3. Allan Hart, St. Edward, sophomore (Cleveland State)
4. Patrick Kearney, Mason, senior (K. Fairmont)
5. Harry Feuer, Mayfield, junior (Mentor)
6. C.J. Campbell, Hilliard Bradley, senior (H. Darby)
7. Austin Murphy, Elder, freshman (K. Fairmont)
8. Nick Henneman, Oregon Clay, sophomore (Cleveland State)
9. Brandon Fenton, Elyria, freshman (Cleveland State)
10. Andre Lowery, Shaker Hts, senior (Mentor)

11. Zack Klima, Lorain, junior (Cleveland State)
12. D.J. Skiba, Brunswick, junior (Cleveland State)
13. Sam Krieder, St. Xavier, junior (K. Fairmont)
14. Kenny Hoberney, Eastlake North, senior (Mentor)
15. Kyle Jenkins, Stow, junior (Mentor)
16. Chase Craft, Northmont, sophomore (K. Fairmont)

CSU – Baughman, Hart, Henneman, Fenton; Klima, Skiba

HD – Mattox, Campbell, Alex Lieb (Watkins Memorial, sophomore), Austin Smith (Zanesville, senior); Vu Nguyen (Pickerington Central, junior)

KF – Kearney, Murphy, Krieder, Craft; A.J. Warner (Fairborn, sophomore)

MEN – Feuer, Lowery, Hoberney, Jenkins; Noah Wakser (Hoover, junior)

After a couple of early season blips – and that’s a relative term – defending state champion Baughman has shown the excellent form that won him a state title last year, and propelled him to a runner-up finish in the pre-season Super 32 Challenge. He missed placement at the Ironman, despite majoring returning state placer Edwards in an early round; and was third at North Canton (at 120), losing an overtime bout to a Junior National double All-American from Michigan. Subsequently, he has used strong third periods to beat the pair of freshman phenoms at this weight statewide – Mattox in the Medina final and Moore in the Wadsworth final.

Baughman will exit the strongest district in this weight class, the one at Cleveland State, which has six ranked wrestlers in all. Returning state placer Hart is the biggest threat to Baughman at the district level, and this pair are among the four top contenders for a state title in the weight class. Hart placed fifth at the Ironman, including high quality wins over the two wrestlers that beat Baughman in that tournament (Hoskins and Rosen from Oklahoma). Since then, he was third at the Cheesehead, and lost tight matches in dual meets to Moore and Blair Academy’s Sherman.

Four others compete for the last two state spots. The sophomore Henneman was a state alternate last year, placed at four tournaments (including a 14-5 win over Fenton in the 7th place match at Brecksville), this year plus winning the TRAC title. The freshman Fenton is next on the ladder, placing eighth at Brecksville, finishing third at the Bill Dies, and beating returning state place Feuer 5-3 to win the NOC. The junior Klima placed seventh at Oregon Clay, while the sophomore Skiba won the North Coast Classic and placed fifth in three other tournaments.

The freshman phenon Mattox, a three-time junior high state champion, is ranked second to Baughman. He fell victim to a third period surge from Baughman in an 8-6 loss during the Medina final, placed third at the Ironman, and won four other tournament titles (including four victories over wrestlers projected to finish top four in their respective state tournaments). Mattox anchors a district at Hilliard Darby that is rather weak in this weight class, as there is only one other ranked wrestler, returning state qualifier Campbell. On this season, Campbell was champion at Olentangy Liberty and third at the GMVWA.

The other top four wrestler in this weight class is the senior Kearney, a returning state placer in this weight class. In his lone competition at this weight class, he was runner-up at the Dvorak, losing 9-4 to a top five wrestler nationally from Illinois. Up at 120 pounds, he was champion at Olentangy Liberty and Groveport Madison, while losing 3-0 to Branson in the Mason final. Three other wrestlers join Kearney in the rankings at Kettering Fairmont; led by the freshman Murphy, who was fifth at SWOWCA, runner-up at Brecksville, and fourth in the CIT. The junior Kreider was champion at Troy (3-1 over Craft in the

semis) and fifth at the CIT, while the sophomore Craft was fifth at the GMVWA, third at Troy, along with a runner-up finish at Valley View and Eaton.

Closing it out here is a Mentor district with four ranked wrestlers, led by returning state placer Feuer, who was champion at Aurora and Kenston, with a pair of runner-up and third place finishes in other tournaments this year. Next on the ladder is the senior Lowery, who was champion at the Hephner, runner-up in three tournaments, and fourth at the NOC despite two wins over ranked wrestlers. 2013 state qualifiers Hoberney and Jenkins round out the ranked group, each having a head-on loss to Lowery this season.

120 pounds

1. Alex Mackall, Walsh Jesuit, junior (Mentor)
2. Jake Newhouse, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
3. Mario Guillen, Perysburg, junior (Cleveland State)
4. Conner Ziegler, Moeller, senior (K. Fairmont)
5. Gage Branson, Glen Este, senior (K. Fairmont)
6. Cameron Latham, Teays Valley, junior (H. Darby)
7. Jake Donahue, Massillon, junior (Mentor)
8. Garrett Lambert, Brunswick, junior (Cleveland State)
9. Jackson Lasko, Central Crossing, junior (H. Darby)
10. Jarrod Brezovec, Aurora, sophomore (Mentor)
11. Colin Schuster, Mason, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
12. Nick Mayer, Elyria, senior (Cleveland State)
13. Connor Gray, Wadsworth, senior (Cleveland State)
14. Daniel Roth, Lakota East, senior (K. Fairmont)
15. Austin Victor, Mentor, junior (Mentor)
16. Andrew Fairbanks, Austintown Fitch, sophomore (Mentor)
17. Derek Sharp, Marysville, sophomore (H. Darby)

CSU – Guillen, Lambert, Mayer, Gray; Ray Porter (Strongsville, junior), Brandon Bartlome (Lorain, junior)
HD – Latham, Lasko, Sharp, Tyler Davis (Mt. Vernon, junior); TBD
KF – Ziegler, Branson, Schuster, Roth; Blake Biteman (Tecumseh, junior)
MEN – Mackall, Newhouse, Donahue, Brezovec; Victor, Fairbanks

Having lost head-on matches to two members of the Division I field at 120 pounds last year prior to the state tournament, slotting Mackall as the state tournament favorite was not realistic. However, the run through the last three matches that he had in Columbus is one of the most impressive things that I've seen in my approximately fifteen years of attending the state tournament. It started in the quarterfinals with a 17-1 technical fall over Josh Heil in a battle of returning placers, before avenging his loss in the Top Gun final with a 17-9 major decision over Shie, and then beating Newhouse 7-4 in a district finals rematch. This year, he won Solon, was seventh at Ironman, and runner-up at Top Gun (losing to Division II favorite Warner in the ultimate tiebreaker).

Last year's state runner-up to Mackall, the senior Newhouse, will again exit the same Mentor district. In order to hit last year's state final, Newhouse upset Assad 8-7 in a quarterfinal where he dominated the end of each period, and then beat Furnas 6-4 in the semifinal. This season, he was eighth at the Ironman (losses were 13-3 to arguably the best wrestler in America, then 3-2 to Warner, and 4-3 to Mackall in the medal match). Subsequent, he was runner-up at the Beast of the East, and then missed some time due

to injury, before returning with a title at Delaware Hayes. This is the deepest of all the districts in the weight class, with four other ranked wrestlers present to contest for two state spots.

Donahue has twice made the state tournament, winning an opening round match on each occasion, but missing out on a top eight placement. This season, he was runner-up at the Gorman and third at Oregon Clay. Returning state placer Brezovec is up two weight classes, and still spent the first chunk of the season up another weight at 126 (won at Aurora, third at Hudson, DNP at Brecksville) and then dropped to earn a title at the CVC. Victor and Fairbanks both lost go-to-state matches last year; Victor was third at Brecksville and NOC but failed to place at Top Gun, while state alternate Fairbanks failed to place at Medina before taking fourth at Top Gun and winning the Hephner.

Ranked third in this weight class is the junior Guillen, who has placed fifth and third at state despite losing in the opening round on both occasions. On this season, he has titles at Brecksville, Oregon Clay, and (at 126) Perrysburg; while advancing to the Ironman quarterfinals at 126, but missing out on placement despite taking the eventual champion to the tiebreakers. He anchors a Cleveland State district that features three other ranked wrestlers. That group is led by returning state placer Lambert, who missed much of the season due to transfer ineligibility and an injury; though it should be noted he wrestled at 126 in his return match.

Seniors Mayer and Gray round out the ranked list here. Mayer was seventh at Brecksville, fourth at the Bill Dies, and beat Victor 1-0 on the way to winning the NOC title; while Gray placed eighth at Medina and second at Wadsworth. With questions about Lambert's status, this all of the sudden becomes a pretty open weight in terms of qualification; note that Porter does have the option to drop to 113, doing so at the Top Gun.

The fourth and fifth wrestlers on the rankings ladder exit the Kettering Fairmont district. Three-time state qualifier, and 2013 state placer, Ziegler was champion at SWOWCA (5-2 over Branson) and a Powerade placer; while returning state placer Branson was runner-up at SWOWCA, with championships at GMVWA (8-6 upset over Stickley in the semis) and Mason. Two other ranked wrestlers are present here, the sophomore Schuster and returning state qualifier Roth. Schuster was champion up at 126 at Olentangy Liberty, while Roth took third at SWOWCA and second at Mason (failing to place at Brecksville).

Rounding it out is a district at Hilliard Darby that features just three state ranked wrestlers, anchored by returning state placer Latham, who was fifth at Brecksville, runner-up at Groveport Madison (at 126), and champion at Central Crossing (3-2 over Lasko). Next on the ladder is returning state qualifier Lasko, who was fifth at Noth Canton, third at Medina, fifth at Oregon Clay, along with runner-up finishes at Delaware Hayes and Central Crossing. The sophomore Sharp is a returning state alternate, who placed sixth at the Top Gun.

126 pounds

1. Austin Assad, Brecksville, senior (Mentor)
2. Jose Rodriguez, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
3. L.J. Bentley, St. Edward, senior (Cleveland State)
4. Shakur Laney, Pickerington North, senior (H. Darby)
5. John Shirkey, LaSalle, senior (K. Fairmont)
6. Xavier Edwards, Lorain, senior (Cleveland State)
7. Jake Marsh, Marysville, freshman (H. Darby)

8. Jeremy Rezabek, Strongsville, junior (Cleveland State)
9. Justin Jolliff, Findlay, senior (Cleveland State)
10. Quinn May, Lebanon, senior (K. Fairmont)
11. Mitch Hannan, Cuyahoga Falls, senior (Cleveland State)
12. Mark Molder, Mentor, senior (Mentor)
13. Elijah Perkins, Miamisburg, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
14. Noah Schaub, Green, senior (Mentor)
15. Isaac Hendershot, Willoughby South, junior (Mentor)
16. Kristopher Volpe, Olentangy Liberty, junior (H. Darby)

CSU – Bentley, Edwards, Rezabek, Jolliff; Hannan

HD – Laney, Marsh, Volpe, Ben Tate (Mt. Vernon, sophomore); Ryan McElwee (Pickerington Central, senior)

KF – Shirkey, May, Perkins, Jake Meredieth (Elder, sophomore); Brandon Hertel (Glen Este, junior)

MEN – Assad, Rodriguez, Molder, Schaub; Hendershot

As it presently stands, Austin Assad has one of the better resumes of a wrestler not to win a state title; placing second/second/third at state, being a two-time Cadet National freestyle All-American, and a Junior National freestyle champion. From a major regular season tournament standpoint, he has the three titles at Brecksville to his credit, and has finished top three each of the last three years at the Ironman (three-times third) and Beast (2nd-3rd-2nd). In terms of cementing the status as a favorite, however narrow that margin actually is, results at the state duals went a long way in that regard; overtime wins over his two direct challengers, 3-1 over Rodriguez and 7-5 over Bentley.

Assad and Rodriguez will meet in either semifinal or final at the Mentor district, depending on how the formula sets it up (separation criteria does not apply at the district level). Rodriguez was state champion in the opening weight two years ago, the third wrestler for Massillon Perry – each was a sophomore – to win that weight class in the 21st century (joining Sammy White and David Bavery). All three of them would fail to win state titles the next year, while White and Bavery went on to win state the next year. This season, Rodriguez won titles at Medina (pinning Bentley in the final), Top Gun, and Delaware Hayes; while finishing fifth at Ironman and fourth at Beast.

Three other ranked wrestlers compete at the Mentor district, seeking the other two state spots. The senior Molder placed seventh at Solon, along with sixth place finishes at Brecksville and Top Gun; Schaub is a returning state qualifier, placing eighth at Medina and fifth at the Bill Dies; while Hendershot is a returning state alternate, placing third at Solon and Olentangy Liberty before finishing runner-up at the Hephner.

Ranked third in this weight class is returning state placer Bentley, who was fourth at 113 pounds last year, which means there is no separation criteria between him and the Mentor district champion. During this season, he missed out on placement at the Ironman (losing to Assad in overtime of an absolutely bizarre quarterfinal match) before taking second at Medina and the Cheesehead. His signature win of the season was the 6-5 dual meet victory over Seipel, the Ironman champion; though in some ways that is countered by one-point losses to Ian Parker (from Michigan) and Bray during dual meets.

He'll exit a deep district at Cleveland State, with four other ranked wrestlers, though none poses a threat for the title. Further, that group could increase in number with weight class shifts. Leading that list is the

senior Edwards, who lost a highly controversial go-to-state match last year; he spent much of the season at 132 including a runner-up finish at North Canton and seventh at Medina, before dropping to 126 with a runner-up finish at Oregon Clay. The junior Rezahek is next, and this season placed second at Solon before winning titles at Kenston and the NOC (but failed to place at the Top Gun). Returning state qualifier Jolliff was at 132 until late January; in that weight class, he was champion at Marion Harding, fourth at Oregon Clay, and runner-up at Wadsworth. Finally, it's the senior Hannan, who was a district placer last year, and has runner-up finishes at Hudson and the NOC to his credit this year.

Two-time state placer Laney, fifth last year, anchors a Hilliard Darby district that features just two other ranked wrestlers. Those would be the freshman Marsh, who won the title at SWOWCA and was runner-up at Top Gun; while the junior Volpe was seventh at Brecksville and fifth at Wadsworth. After returning from transfer suspension, Laney was third at the Top Gun, losing by fall to Rodriguez in the semifinal before winning titles at Mason and Groveport Madison.

Closing it out is the district at Kettering Fairmont, also with just three ranked wrestlers, and anchored by returning state qualifier Shirkey – down a weight from last year. This year, Shirkey was a quarterfinalist at Brecksville and fourth at the Top Gun (losing 8-2 and 4-3 to Laney). The senior May is a returning state qualifier, placing second at SWOWCA with titles at Edgewood and Fairfield; while the sophomore Perkins lost twice in tournament finals to May, and was fourth at North Canton.

132 pounds

1. Hunter Ladnier, St. Edward, junior (Cleveland State)
2. Jonathan Furnas, Olentangy Liberty, senior (H. Darby)
3. Corey Shie, LaSalle, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
4. Josh Heil, Brunswick, junior (Cleveland State)
5. Jason Spencer, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
6. James Wimer, Central Crossing, junior (H. Darby)
7. Chandler Minnard, Pickerington North, senior (H. Darby)
8. Moises Guillen, Perrysburg, junior (Cleveland State)
9. Andrew Lieb, Watkins Memorial, senior (H. Darby)
10. Nico O'Dor, Elyria, junior (Cleveland State)
11. Darrin Gilkerson, Wadsworth, junior (Cleveland State)
12. Kyle Dooley, Teays Valley, senior (H. Darby)
13. Brady Chrisman, Medina, freshman (Cleveland State)
14. Dylan Buis, Oak Hills, junior (K. Fairmont)
15. Antonio Mitchell, Willoughby South, senior (Mentor)
16. Brandon Smith, Glen Este, junior (K. Fairmont)

CSU – Ladnier, Heil, Guillen, O'Dor; Gilkerson, Chrisman

HD – Furnas, Wimer, Minnard, Lieb; Dooley

KF – Shie, Buis, Smith, Deante Evans (Lakota East, senior); Jake Thompson (Moeller, freshman)

MEN – Spencer, Mitchell, Nathan Langston (Solon, senior), Noah McCumbers (Massillon, junior); Danny Novak (Aurora, junior)

A pair of nationally ranked wrestlers has separated themselves from the field during the course of this season. The junior Ladnier was a state alternate in this weight class last year; but entered the state tournament due to another wrestler having to pull out of the event, and then went an unexpected 0-2. During the present season, he was fourth at the Ironman, first at Medina, and third at the Cheesehead.

In addition, Ladnier beat Tucker from Blair Academy and (by major decision) Rocky Jordan in January. In his January loss by fall to Lincoln Olson, a three-time Michigan state champion, he held a 7-3 lead during the second period before getting caught.

The senior Furnas, a Cornell commit and Super 32 placer, is a two-time state placer. This season, he was runner-up at Brecksville, losing 3-1 to Olson after beating Shie 6-5 in the semifinal. He also was champion at Wadsworth, with a 15-8 win over Rocky Jordan in the quarterfinal. Furnas will anchor a rather deep Hilliard Darby district at this weight class with four other ranked wrestlers, all with state tournament experience, in the hunt for the remaining three state tournament spots.

That ladder is led by the junior Wimer, who was third at North Canton and fifth at Medina before runner-up finishes at Oregon Clay and Delaware Hayes; three-time state placer (though in lower divisions at Bloom-Carroll) Minnard was runner-up at Top Gun and first at Mason, along with a head-on win over Dooley, since his return from transfer suspension; returning state placer Lieb was fourth at North Canton and fifth at the GMVWA; while 2013 state qualifier Dooley fell short of placement at Brecksville, and won the title at Groveport Madison.

Circling back to Ladnier, he anchors the district at Cleveland State district, which at present features five other state ranked wrestlers. That group is led by two-time state placer Heil, who has titles at Solon, the Bill Dies, and NOC to his credit this season. Returning state placer Guillen is next on the ladder, with three wins at the Ironman and a sixth at Brecksville on the resume before winning titles at Perrysburg and Oregon Clay (9-7 over Wimer in that final). Right behind is the junior O'Dor, who also won three matches at the Ironman and was fifth at Brecksville (beating Guillen 2-1 in the medal match), before runner-up finishes to Heil at the Bill Dies and NOC.

Outside the projected state spots are returning state qualifier Gilkerson, who was fifth at Wadsworth and placed fifth up a weight class at North Canton, as well as the freshman Chrisman. Chrisman had the Hephner title, where he upset Carter 3-2 along the way; also placing fifth at Oregon Clay and third at the NOC, after falling a match short of placement at Medina.

A third wrestler is likely to have say in the state title landscape, and that is the sophomore Shie. He was fourth at state last year, and is a multi-time Fargo All-American. During this season, he was champion at SWOWCA and Top Gun, with a fourth place finish at Brecksville (wins over Guillen and O'Dor, but 6-5 losses to Furnas and Poullas). He'll exit a Kettering Fairmont district that has just two other ranked wrestlers, but both are in the lower ends of the standings. Buis was third at SWOWCA; while Smith was fourth at SWOWCA and sixth at the GMVWA.

138 pounds

1. Richie Screptock, Oregon Clay, senior (Cleveland State)
2. Dominick Demas, Dublin Coffman, sophomore (H. Darby)
3. Nick Kiussis, Brunswick, sophomore (Cleveland State)
4. Jacoby Ward, Moeller, junior (K. Fairmont)
5. Justin Demicco, Brecksville, junior (Mentor)
6. Greg Brusco, Delaware Hayes, junior (H. Darby)
7. Jared Lasko, Madison, senior (Mentor)
8. Mateo Lybarger, Mt. Vernon, senior (H. Darby)
9. Tyler Workman, Parma, senior (Mentor)
10. Brandon Tucker, Loveland, senior (K. Fairmont)

11. Antwon Pugh, Copley, sophomore (Cleveland State)
12. Michael Nagy, Uniontown Lake, senior (Mentor)
13. Isaac Collier, St. Edward, junior (Cleveland State)
14. Emil Soehnlén, Massillon Perry, freshman (Mentor)
15. Caleb Walden, Mason, senior (K. Fairmont)
16. Ryley Regan, Miamisburg, junior (K. Fairmont)

CSU – Sreptock, Kiussis, Pugh, Collier; Darrion Overall (Elyria, senior)

HD – Demas, Brusco, Lybarger, Joseph Terry (Pickerington Central, junior); Ty Yeager (Licking Hts, senior)

KF – Ward, Tucker, Walden, Regan; Eric Beck (LaSalle, sophomore)

MEN – Demicco, Lasko, Workman, Nagy; Soehnlén

Last year it was the Central Michigan signee Sreptock who removed Oregon Clay from an inglorious distinction of having the most state medalists without a champion. This year he'll enter the state series as the favorite, even if it's a tenuous distinction. On the season Sreptock was runner-up at Solon and Brecksville (losing tiebreaker decisions to the other two projected state champions in this weight), fourth at the Ironman, and champion at Oregon Clay and Wadsworth.

Sreptock exits a Cleveland State district that features three other ranked wrestlers, including his state finals opponent from last year in the sophomore Kiussis, who has been out of the lineup for many competitions. His notable competitions season to date came at 145, where he beat two-time state placer Kaminski and won the NOC title, but he made this weight class in a dual meet. The two other ranked wrestlers are the sophomore Pugh, who was champion at Perry and third at the Bill Dies; while returning state alternate Collier was runner-up at Medina and a top eight placer at the Cheesehead.

Ranked second in this weight class is the sophomore Demas, who was lost an overtime decision in the state semifinals last year in this weight before "triple dipping" to sixth. This season, he failed to place at the Ironman, going 3-2, before finishing second at the GMVWA (7-3 loss to Ryan Thomas, whom Sreptock beat 5-0 at Wadsworth) and winning the title at Mason.

Based on the composition used to rank this weight class, Demas is joined by just two other ranked wrestlers in this weight class at Hilliard Darby; 2013 state placer Brusco and returning state qualifier Lybarger. On the season, Brusco has titles at Mt. Vernon, Top Gun, and Delaware Hayes; while he placed fifth at the GMVWA. The senior Lybarger spent much of the year up at 145 before making the drop, and winning a title at Central Crossing; up a weight class, he was one match short of placing at Brecksville, fourth at SWOWCA, and runner-up at Oregon Clay.

The district tournament at Mentor features five ranked wrestlers, including three with state tournament experience. Leading that list is returning state placer Demicco, who missed Ironman placement by a match and finished eighth at the Beast before missing time due to injury; since returning, he picked up a pair of wins over ranked wrestlers in the state dual semifinal and final. Next is the senior Lasko, a 2013 state placer, who lost his go-to-state match in overtime last year; this year, he was champion at North Coast and the Bill Dies (where he avenged that loss in the final), and placed fifth at Brecksville. Returning state qualifier Workman won titles at Aurora, Hudson, and the NOC; while losing to Lasko by fall in the Bill Dies final. The senior Nagy was a district placer last year, and has runner-up finishes at North Canton and the Hephner to go with placements at Brecksville and the Top Gun; while the freshman Soehnlén placed third at Medina, seventh at Top Gun, and second at Delaware Hayes.

Two-time state placer Ward leads four ranked wrestlers in the Kettering Fairmont district. On the season, Ward lost 2-1 to Tucker to finish second at SWOWCA and fell to defending state champion Hagan in overtime at the CIT final. Two-time former state qualifier Tucker is next on the ladder, having won a title at SWOWCA to go with a sixth at Brecksville and third place finishes at Troy and Delaware Hayes (pinned by Soehnlén). The senior Walden is a returning district placer, and has been a finalist in four events this season; while the junior Regan was third at North Canton, with titles at Edgewood and Fairfield.

145 pounds

1. Kade Kowalski, Tri-Valley, senior (H. Darby)
2. Zac Carson, Uniontown Lake, senior (Mentor)
3. Nick Steed, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
4. Tanner Miller, Lancaster, senior (H. Darby)
5. Andrew Sams, LaSalle, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
6. Nick Montgomery, Madison, senior (Mentor)
7. Justyn Bostic, Massillon Jackson, senior (Mentor)
8. Sonny Lucas, Brecksville, senior (Mentor)
9. Hunter Bryant, Piqua, junior (K. Fairmont)
10. Cody Notestine, Pickerington North, senior (H. Darby)
11. Trey Grenier, Olentangy Liberty, sophomore (H. Darby)
12. Joey Baughman, Wadsworth, freshman (Cleveland State)
13. Christian Camacho, Brunswick, senior (Cleveland State)
14. Jack Conway, St. Edward, junior (Cleveland State)
15. Mike Connick, Chardon, senior (Mentor)
16. Jimmy Staschiak, Findlay, senior (Cleveland State)

CSU – Baughman, Camacho, Conway, Staschiak; Brendan Price (Elyria, sophomore)

HD – Kowalski, Miller, Notestine, Grenier; Max Wright (Delaware Hayes, sophomore), Tanner Harding (Gahanna Lincoln, junior)

KF – Sams, Bryant, Dylan Roth (Oak Hills, junior), Connor Craig (Elder, sophomore); Steven Lewis (Vandalia Butler, senior)

MEN – Carson, Steed, Montgomery, Bostic; Lucas, Connick

First and foremost, let's start by saying there are a lot of moving parts in this weight class; most notably returning state champion Kowalski, who is the projected state champion here. He competed at 152 earlier this season; failing to place at Ironman, after losing to nationally ranked wrestlers in Kraisser and Harrell from Maryland, but beating state runner-up Mossing and state champion Romero. Kowalski then missed a bunch of time due to injury, and somewhere along the way has a certification in this weight class.

Regardless of if Kowalski goes 145 or 152, he is the favorite. There has been some reaction within the Hilliard Darby district that he exits to his projected move to 145 – Lybarger and Terry dropped to 138, while Rooney shifted up to 152. There was some deliberation about returning state qualifier Grenier dropping to 138, but the other movements have him most likely staying here. In addition, my opinion becomes that returning state placer Miller could move to 152 for a more open finalist path.

Back to wrestling, Miller was champion at Olentangy and (at 152) Olentangy Liberty, while finishing runner-up at Medina (3-1 loss to Steed) and the Hephner. Returning state alternate Notestine was

runner-up at Solon, third at Medina (2-0 loss to Steed), sixth at Top Gun, with titles at Groveport Madison and Mason. Fourth and final among the ranked wrestlers at Darby is Grenier, who has missed large chunks of the season, but is back now.

The second and third ranked wrestlers, as well as three others within the top eight exit the district at Mentor. That means a state placement caliber wrestler will not make it to state, and given the sectional situation, there is no likely “cheap path” (i.e. making it without beating one of the others). Two-time state placer Carson, a 2013 state runner-up, is the projected state runner-up. This season, he was champion at North Canton and the Hephner, while finishing second at Top Gun and third at Brecksville (both losses to Dobben). Ranked third is returning state runner-up Steed, who went 3-2 at both the Ironman and Beast of the East; before winning titles at Medina and Delaware Hayes, along with a third at Top Gun (losing to Dobben in the semifinal).

Returning state alternate Bostic, returning state placer Montgomery, and 2013 state placer Lucas are most likely battling for two spots behind Carson and Steed. Bostic lost an overtime match to Carson in the opening weekend, missed out of North Canton due to illness, lost an 8-7 match in the quarters at Medina before injury defaulting, and then returned to finish third at Hephner (losing to Miller). Montgomery was champion at North Coast and (at 152) Perry, along with a seventh at Brecksville and runner-up at Bill Dies. Lucas went a combined 3-4 at Ironman and the Beast of the East, made the quarters at Brecksville before injury defaulting, and then didn’t return until early February; since the return, he lost 8-1 to Steed in the state duals semi, and beat Conway 6-4 in the state duals final.

While the Cleveland State district does feature four ranked wrestlers, it is relatively soft, as there is no projected state placer among the lot. It represents an opportunity for some of the power programs (i.e. St. Edward, Wadsworth, Elyria, and Brunswick) to peck an extra state qualifier. In fact, those programs all have wrestlers ranked in the top five at this district. The freshman Baughman is the highest rated wrestler here, having spent much of the season at 152 (including two wins over returning D2 state placers and one over a returning D1 state qualifier). His primary tournament at 145 was at Wadsworth, where he lost 6-4 to Staschiak in the pool stage.

The senior Staschiak is the wrestler not from the four programs listed above on the ladder here, and he finished third at Wadsworth and Oregon Clay to go with a runner-up finish at Groveport Madison. Fellow senior Camacho is a returning state qualifier, who was third at Solon and fifth at the Bill Dies to go with his (at 152) NOC runner-up finish. Rounding out the ranked four is the junior Conway, who was seventh at Medina, though he did lose 6-5 to Price at state duals.

Closing it out is the district at Kettering Fairmont, which has just two ranked wrestlers – returning state placer Sams and returning state qualifier Bryant. Sams was champion at SWOWCA, fifth at Brecksville (5-3 over Montgomery notably), and fourth at Top Gun (4-3 over Notestine notably); while Bryant spent much of the year at 152, including a fifth at Top Gun, before making the drop.

152 pounds

1. Taleb Rahmani, Marysville, senior (H. Darby)
2. Mario Graziani, Boardman, junior (Mentor)
3. Austin Hiles, Brecksville, junior (Mentor)
4. Tim Rooney, Columbus St. Charles, senior (H. Darby)
5. Dillon Leneave, Fairfield, senior (K. Fairmont)
6. Brice Locklear, Olmsted Falls, junior (Cleveland State)

7. Mikah Price, Elyria, junior (Cleveland State)
8. Ben Hooff, Thomas Worthington, senior (H. Darby)
9. Ryan Kaminski, Green, senior (Mentor)
10. Nick Notestine, Pickerington North, senior (H. Darby)
11. Victor Marcelli, Massillon Jackson, freshman (Mentor)
12. Brandon Goldsmith, Westerville North, junior (H. Darby)
13. Mike Carpenter, St. Edward, sophomore (Cleveland State)
14. Zach Defraime, Medina, junior (Cleveland State)
15. Brad Carroll, Kettering Fairmont, senior (K. Fairmont)
16. Nick D'Agostino, Mason, junior (K. Fairmont)
17. Nick Collica, Nardon, senior (Cleveland State)
18. Logan Calvert, Sidney, senior (K. Fairmont)

CSU – Locklear, Price, Carpenter, Defraime; Collica

HD – Rahmani, Rooney, Hooff, Notestine; Goldsmith, Connor Thomas (Olentangy Liberty, junior)

KF – Leneave, Carroll, D'Agostino, Calvert; Avery Jones (Glen Este, junior)

MEN – Graziani, Hiles, Kaminski, Marcelli; David Masch (Uniontown Lake, senior), Billy Buehl (Hudson, senior)

With Kowalski projected to be down at 145, the group at 152 has to feel a degree of relief. That group is anchored by three-time state placer Rahmani, who was a state semifinalist as a freshman before losing in the quarterfinal round each of the last two years. This season, he has lost twice to Lawson (1-0 dual meet, 6-2 Ironman) and a wrestler from California, while winning three major tournament titles – SWOWCA, Brecksville, and Top Gun. Rahmani beat three of the four wrestlers ranked directly below him during those finals (pinning Leneave, 7-5 over Hiles, and 4-2 over Graziani).

The Hilliard Darby district that Rahmani exits features four other state ranked wrestlers, led by two-time state placer Rooney, who was champion at Marion Harding and CIT runner-up in this weight class. Returning state qualifier Hooff lost 3-2 to Rooney in the Marion Harding final and finished third at Olentangy. State alternate Notestine placed fourth at Solon, second at Medina and Mason, seventh at Top Gun, and first at Groveport Madison; while district placer Goldsmith was fourth at Medina.

The other deep district in this weight class, though without a top five ranked wrestler, is the one at Cleveland State that also features five ranked wrestlers. Leading the way is returning state alternate Locklear, who was champion at Medina and third at the Bill Dies (12-5 loss to Hiles in the semifinal). Next in line is district placer Price, who was champion at the NOC, which was preceded by fourth place finishes at Brecksville and the Bill Dies. The sophomore Carpenter placed seventh at Medina, including wins over Kaminski and Steiner; the junior Defraime is a returning state qualifier who was third at Medina and the Hephner, runner-up at Oregon Clay, and fifth at the NOC; while the senior Collica was a district placer last year, finishing third at Solon before missing out on placements at Brecksville and Top Gun.

The wrestlers ranked second and third in this weight class, Graziani and Hiles, both are juniors and exit the Mentor district. Graziani placed eighth at 145 last year, and on this season was champion at Kenston and runner-up at Top Gun. Hiles qualified for state at 132 last year, including a win eventual state champion Screptock in the district semifinal, but had to scratch due to skin condition; this year, he was sixth at the Beast of the East, along with runner-up finishes at Brecksville and the Bill Dies. Returning state qualifier Kaminski was runner-up at Solon, but had to injury default after a 3-2 loss to Carpenter

early at Medina, and his status is unknown. The fourth – and possibly third – qualifying spots at this district are a total crap shoot, as a slew of wrestlers have asymmetrical outcomes against each other. The one ranked is the freshman Marcelli, who was champion at the Hephner and fifth at Top Gun, though he was 1-2 at Top Gun with a pair of one-point losses to wrestlers not ranked but in this district.

Rounding it out is the Kettering Fairmont district, which features four ranked wrestlers, including returning state qualifier Leneave who was runner-up at SWOWCA. The three other ranked wrestlers are between 15th and 18th; Carroll was third at SWOWCA, eighth at Brecksville, and champion at Mason with a 7-2 victory over Notestine.

160 pounds

1. Shane Mast, Wadsworth, senior (Cleveland State)
2. Austin Phillips, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
3. Alex Sepeda, Marysville, senior (H. Darby)
4. Jimmy Thompson, Lancaster, sophomore (H. Darby)
5. Tyler McCafferty, Pickerington North, senior (H. Darby)
6. Lane Hinkle, Mt. Vernon, junior (H. Darby)
7. Travis Leopold, Avon, senior (Cleveland State)
8. Brett Bryant, Moeller, sophomore (K. Fairmont)
9. Andrew Hoinous, Springboro, senior (K. Fairmont)
10. Dan Waltermeyer, Perrysburg, senior (Cleveland State)
11. Jacob Bria, Fairfield, junior (K. Fairmont)
12. Noah Edwards, Twinsburg, senior (Mentor)
13. Anthony Mancini, Boardman, senior (Mentor)
14. Matt DeGroff, Uniontown Lake, senior (Mentor)
15. D.J. Williamson, St. Edward, senior (Cleveland State)
16. Nick Hammond, Canal Winchester, senior (H. Darby)

CSU – Mast, Leopold, Waltermeyer, Williamson; Colin Keil (Anthony Wayne, junior)

HD – Sepeda, Thompson, McCafferty, Hinkle; Hammond

KF – Bryant, Hoinous, Bria, Steven Serbinski (Lebanon, senior); Jeremiah Slagle (Sidney, senior)

MEN – Phillips, Edwards, Mancini, DeGroff; Garrett Poling (Massillon Jackson, senior)

While it has been said that every weight class counts the same, and a state title is a state title, some are “better” than others. This would qualify as one of those “others”. Using a random number generator would more likely effectively rank this weight class than any cogent analysis (some of course would rather trust the random number generator than me based on merit across the board regardless).

The present composition of this weight class is seven returning state qualifiers, four of whom each went 1-2 at state last year. Projected state champ Mast was one of those to win a match at the Schott. He missed the first two-thirds of the season due to injury, and upon his return was runner-up at Wadsworth. He’s one of four ranked wrestlers at the Cleveland State district. Next on the list is fellow senior Leopold, who has titles at Avon Lake, Perry, and the Bill Dies to his credit this season. Returning state qualifier Waltermeyer won a match in Columbus last year, finished fourth at Brecksville, won Perrysburg, and was third at Oregon Clay; while Williamson was a state alternate last year, coming back in mid-January (since the return, he beat his opponent from Blair Academy and lost to DeGroff).

At present, the projected runner-up in this weight class is 2013 state qualifier Phillips, who was at 170 until mid-January. While in that weight class, he was seventh at the Beast and a runner-up at Medina; since dropping to 160, he was champion at the Top Gun with wins over a pair of Division II state qualifiers. However, there is question about his availability for the state series, as an injury kept him out of Delaware Hayes and the state duals. Not having Phillips would be a big loss for the Panthers in their quest to repeat as state champions, as well as in the battle for the second place trophy.

The Mentor district features three ranked wrestlers behind him, as well as returning state alternate Poling. Returning state qualifier Edwards is the first behind Phillips in the rankings at this district, and on the season he was runner-up at Solon and the Bill Dies, third at Kenston, and champion at the NOC. Mancini placed third at Kenston and seventh at Top Gun in the 170 weight class, before dropping to 160 at the Hephner and placing third. That included a win over DeGroff, who was held out of tournaments until the Hephner, just competing in dual meets; there, the very talented senior placed fifth. He also beat Steed 6-4 in a dual meet, though Steed weighed-in up at 152, and bumped a weight class.

Five ranked wrestlers, including four state qualifiers, make Hilliard Darby the deepest district in this weight class. Sepeda was one of those to win a state match last year, went 3-2 at the Ironman and then missed a bunch of time due to injury; he then returned in late January. District placer Thompson is next on the ladder, and this season he was champion at Olentangy Liberty, third at Medina, and a semifinalist at the Hephner; he has not been on the mat since then. The senior McCafferty also won a state match last year; he has three tournament titles to go with a fifth place finish at Medina. Returning state qualifier Hinkle was champion at Mt. Vernon, SWOWCA, and Central Crossing to go with a runner-up finish at Oregon Clay; while another state qualifier Hammond was runner-up at Dublin Scioto.

Wrapping it up is the Kettering Fairmont district, which features just three ranked wrestlers, none with state tournament experience. The sophomore Bryant was third at SWOWCA, champion at the CIT, and went 3-2 at the Ironman and Powerade respectively. Returning state alternate Hoinous was third at the GMVWA and champion at Beavercreek, with a dual meet victory over Bria. The aforementioned Bria bat Edwards on the way to Kenston title, was also champion at Fairfield, and took fourth at SWOWCA.

170 pounds

1. Jesse Palser, Mansfield, senior (Cleveland State)
2. Tim Knipl, Wadsworth, senior (Cleveland State)
3. Andrew McNally, Uniontown Lake, junior (Mentor)
4. Jordan Paul, Loveland, junior (K. Fairmont)
5. Keegan Driscoll, Hilliard Bradley, senior (H. Darby)
6. Clayton Ray, Central Crossing, senior (H. Darby)
7. Zach Donatelli, Hilliard Darby, senior (H. Darby)
8. Branden Bryant, Brunswick, senior (Cleveland State)
9. J.T. Brown, Elyria, sophomore (Cleveland State)
10. Tony Caraffi, Olmsted Falls, junior (Cleveland State)
11. Matt Waltermeyer, Perrysburg, senior (Cleveland State)
12. Riley Etherington, Stebbins, senior (K. Fairmont)
13. David Blanchard, Walsh Jesuit, freshman (Mentor)
14. Cameron Pitts, Mason, senior (K. Fairmont)
15. Kyler Slade, Olentangy, senior (H. Darby)
16. Chad Salzer, Springboro, senior (K. Fairmont)
17. Colton Carroll, Teays Valley, junior (H. Darby)

CSU – Palser, Knipl, Bryant, Brown; Caraffi, Waltermeyer
HD – Driscoll, Ray, Donatelli, Slade; Carroll, Jake Crosby (Grove City, senior)
KF – Paul, Etherington, Pitts, Salzer; Mark Kimbrell (Kettering Fairmont, sophomore)
MEN – McNally, Blanchard, Chris Head (Massillon Jackson, senior), Eric Murdock (Twinsburg, senior);
Lewis Glass (Maple Hts, junior)

The three returning state placers competing in this weight stand ahead of the field. The top two in the rankings will exit the Cleveland State district in state runner-up Palser and returning state fifth Knipl. Knipl beat Palser in the district semifinal last year, but lost in the state semifinal 3-0 to eventual champion Joe Heyob, who was extended to the ultimate tiebreaker by Palser; Knipl's second state tournament loss was to Isaac Bast, whom Palser beat in the opening round at state.

The projected champion is Palser, who placed eighth at the Ironman, defaulting out of the tournament after winning his placement match; his lone contested loss was 4-3 to Brandon Dallavia, a top ten in the country wrestler from Blair Academy. Ranked second is Knipl, who was at 182 for the first half of the year, where he finished one match short of placement losing to a pair of nationally ranked wrestlers. He also was champion at North Canton and third at Medina while at 182; after dropping to this weight class, he lost 3-2 to projected Division II champion Whisler in the Wadsworth final.

There are four other state ranked wrestlers in what is an absolutely loaded weight class at Cleveland State. The senior Bryant was runner-up at Solon and the NOC, champion at North Coast and the Bill Dies, and third at Medina. Brown, a sophomore, is the other projected state qualifier; having placed fourth at the Bill Dies (two losses to Caraffi) and first at the NOC (4-3 over Brown in the final). Next in line is the junior Caraffi, who was fourth at Medina (losing 9-3 to Bryant in the medal match) and third at the Bill Dies (10-3 loss to Bryant in the semi). Finally, it's the senior Waltermeyer, who was a state alternate down three weight classes last year; this year he was 2-2 at both Ironman and Brecksville, before a runner-up finish at Perrysburg and fourth at Oregon Clay.

The other returning state placer is the junior McNally, who was fifth at 152 pounds last year. This year, he was champion at North Canton, Top Gun, and the Hephner with just a 3-1 semifinal loss to Patchin at Brecksville as a blemish on the resume. He anchors a paper thin Mentor district, which has just one other ranked wrestler in the freshman Blanchard, who placed fifth at the Top Gun.

Along with Cleveland State, the other deep district at this weight class is the one at Hilliard Darby that features a pair of returning state qualifiers and five ranked wrestlers (though one of the returning state qualifiers – Donatelli – has been injured all year, so his status is in question). The other returning qualifier is the senior Ray, who has returned from the half-season transfer suspension with a third at Oregon Clay and a second at Delaware Hayes. Last year a state alternate, Driscoll has been excellent this season with titles at Olentnagy and the GMVWA. The senior Slade was third at Olentnagy, seventh at Medina, and fourth at Top Gun; while the junior Carroll was eighth at Brecksville and runner-up at Groveport Madison.

Closing it out is the Kettering Fairmont district with four ranked wrestlers, led by the returning state qualifier Paul who was runner-up at SWOWCA and fifth at Brecksville, before winning titles at Troy and Delaware Hayes. Next on the ladder is the senior Etherington, who was champion at Mason. Fellow senior Pitts follows, and he was fifth at the Dvorak with a runner-up finish at Mason, before winning titles at Groveport Madison and the GMC; he also has an overtime victory over Salzer in an early

February dual meet. Returning state alternate Salzer is the other ranked wrestler, and this season was sixth at the GMVWA and a runner-up at Beaver creek.

182 pounds

1. Ben Darmstadt, Elyria, junior (Cleveland State)
2. Jordan Collins, Mason, senior (K. Fairmont)
3. Mike Lewis, Parma, senior (Mentor)
4. Jacob Hinz, Westerville North, senior (H. Darby)
5. Nate Hall, Olentangy, senior (H. Darby)
6. Garrick Ginter, Sidney, senior (K. Fairmont)
7. Julian Daniels, Cincinnati Northwest, senior (K. Fairmont)
8. Luke Strnad, Brecksville, sophomore (Mentor)
9. Eric Deluse, Lancaster, junior (H. Darby)
10. Cameron Mayell, North Royalton, senior (Cleveland State)
11. Lucas Staten, Mt. Vernon, senior (H. Darby)
12. Anthony Perrine, Nardon, sophomore (Cleveland State)
13. Kaden Russell, St. Ignatius, sophomore (Mentor)
14. Mike Coup, Ashtabula Lakeside, sophomore (Mentor)
15. Donald Martin, Gahanna Lincoln, junior (H. Darby)
16. Jeff Christian, Solon, senior (Mentor)
17. Mike Bekeny, Brunswick, senior (Cleveland State)

CSU – Darmstadt, Mayell, Perrine, Bekeny; Tyler Stepic (St. Edward, sophomore)

HD – Hinz, Hall, Deluse, Staten; Martin, Patrick Yeo (Hilliard Bradley, junior)

KF – Collins, Ginter, Daniels, Mark Adams (Elder, senior); Matt Kennedy (Glen Este, senior)

MEN – Lewis, Strnad, Russell, Coup; Christian

In terms of resumes, this is a relatively barren weight class. Just six kids have state experience, tied for second least in Division I with 106 and 195 (220 has the least at five). However, in that lot, there are a pair of returning state placers. Leading the way is returning state runner-up Darmstadt, even though his runner-up finish came down three weights. However, one could argue that the 2014-15 season has shown that jump in weight class augmented his performance. He placed fourth in the preseason Super 32 Challenge, was third at Ironman, had four first period pins and a major in winning Brecksville, before a runner-up finish at the Bill Dies. Since that, he pinned Margheim in early February, and won the NOC meet with a 13-4 major decision over the third ranked Lewis.

The other returning state placer is Hall, who placed sixth in this same weight class last year. This season he was fourth at North Canton and Medina, while winning titles at Top Gun and Delaware Hayes. However, it is returning state qualifier Hinz, who leads the way at the Hilliard Darby district, having beaten Hall 5-4 in the semifinal on the way to a runner-up finish at Medina. Those two are joined by three other ranked wrestlers in this district weight class. The junior Deluse is a returning state alternate, who has titles at Olentangy and the Hephner to go with a runner-up finish at Olentangy Liberty and a fifth place finish at Medina. The senior Staten qualified for state as a freshman, and this season was runner-up at SWOWCA, sixth at Brecksville, and fifth at Oregon Clay; he did drop to 170 during the state dual series, though the inclination here is that he stays up. Rounding out the ranked lot is returning district placer Martin, who was runner-up at Delaware Hayes.

The other district with five ranked wrestlers is the one at Mentor, which is anchored by returning state qualifier Lewis. This season, he was champion at Aurora (at 195), Hudson, and Kenston before finishing third at the Bill Dies and runner-up at the NOC. Next on this district's ladder is the sophomore Strnad, who was one match from placing at the Ironman before taking fourth at both Brecksville and the Bill Dies (where he lost twice to Lewis). Another sophomore Russell had a very hot CIT where he pinned both returning state placer Huffman and state qualifier Beauch to win that title. Next is Coup, another sophomore, who was runner-up to Lewis at Kenston; while the senior Christian rounds it out having finished third at Solon and the North Coast Classic before taking fourth at Oregon Clay.

Circling back to Darmstadt, he anchors a Cleveland State district, which features three other ranked wrestlers. Most notable on the list is Brecksville runner-up Mayell, who was also champion at the North Coast, runner-up at the Hephner (7-0 loss to Deluse), and third at the NOC after getting pinned by Darmstadt in the semis. The sophomore Perrine was a state alternate last year, and was the starting tailback on Nordonia's state runner-up football team, so the start to his season was a bit slow; failed to place at Brecksville before taking fourth at Top Gun. The senior Bekeny was fourth at Solon and the NOC, while finishing runner-up at the North Coast.

Rounding it out is the Kettering Fairmont district, which is led by our second ranked wrestler, the senior Collins who went just 2-2 at district last year. However, this season, it's been excellent form; starting off with an 8-7 win over Patchin on the opening Saturday of the year. It continued with a title at Olentangy Liberty and a runner-up finish at the Dvorak, which included a win over three-time Illinois state placer Alex Benoit in December. Then, he won titles at Mason, Groveport Madison, and the GMC.

Just two other ranked wrestlers exit the district, but both are projected state placers. Returning state qualifier Ginter was first at Sidney and runner-up at the GMVWA, while fellow senior Daniels was champion at SWOWCA, Fairfield, and Milford.

195 pounds

1. Matt Stencel, Oregon Clay, junior (Cleveland State)
2. Isaiah Margheim, Lorain, senior (Cleveland State)
3. Robbie Fusner, Central Crossing, junior (H. Darby)
4. Aaron Naples, Brunswick, sophomore (Cleveland State)
5. Gary Traub, Sycamore, junior (K. Fairmont)
6. Drew Fenton, Lakota West, junior (K. Fairmont)
7. Jared Campbell, St. Edward, sophomore (Cleveland State)
8. Brady Durieux, Massillon Perry, senior (Mentor)
9. Chris Martinez, Delaware Hayes, junior (H. Darby)
10. Nick Kramer, Westerville North, senior (H. Darby)
11. Alec Winston, North Olmsted, senior (Cleveland State)
12. Joe Conway, St. Ignatius, senior (Mentor)
13. Grant Martin, Uniontown Lake, junior (Mentor)
14. Gage Brock, Elder, senior (K. Fairmont)
15. Tristen Weirich, Ashland, junior (Cleveland State)
16. A.J. Jones, Thomas Worthington, junior (H. Darby)
17. Logan Kemp, Centerville, junior (K. Fairmont)

CSU – Stencel, Margheim, Naples, Campbell; Winston, Weirich
HD – Fusner, Martinez, Kramer, Jones; Shawn Norris (Lancaster, senior)
KF – Traub, Fenton, Brock, Kemp; Ahmad Doucet (Kettering Fairmont, junior)
MEN – Durieux, Conway, Martin, Devin Johnson (Chardon, junior); Matt Delsanter (Hudson, senior)

Two wrestlers in this weight class have finished as state runners-up in the past. These two wrestlers met in a very entertaining semifinal match at the Walsh Ironman, one that Stencel won by 8-6 decision on a takedown in the last seconds of regulation countering action off a Margheim throw. These two wrestlers exit the same district, so another meeting in the semifinal or final at Cleveland State looms prior to state. Hopefully these wrestlers will provide more entertainment in their next meeting(s).

Stencel was runner-up at Ironman, while he has added titles in five other tournaments this season. Along the way, he has wins over both projected Division II finalists, the second ranked wrestler in Division III, and the fourth ranked wrestler in this division. In three of his tournament wins, the Cadet National double champion from this summer pinned his way through the bracket. Margheim ended up placing third at the Ironman with an OT win over projected Division II finalist Faust in the medal match. He won the title at Medina a pin of his own against Naples, and was champion at Oregon Clay down at 182.

Four other ranked wrestlers also compete at Cleveland State, so they are essentially seeking two state spots. Ranked fourth in this division, Naples is just a sophomore; this season has been runner-up at Solon, North Coast (losing 7-1 to projected Division II champ Kremiller), and Medina before winning titles at the Bill Dies and NOC. Fellow sophomore Campbell was a state alternate in this weight last year, and this season was a semifinalist at Medina (losing by fall to Margheim before having to injury default during the consolation semi). Other ranked wrestlers here are the senior Winston, who was runner-up at Aurora and champion at Kenston; along with the sophomore Weirich, runner-up at North Canton and the Gorman while placing fourth at Brecksville.

The Hilliard Darby district also features a pair of state qualifiers, with four ranked wrestlers in all. Returning state qualifier Fusner leads the ladder here, finishing fifth at Oregon Clay before winning titles at Delaware Hayes (7-1 over Martinez in the final) and Central Crossing; while up at 220, he was third at North Canton and fifth at Medina. Next on the ladder is the junior Martinez, who was third at the GMVWA, runner-up at the Top Gun (losing 4-3 to Durieux) and Delaware Hayes, and has a 3-2 dual meet victory over Kramer this season. The senior Kramer is a returning state qualifier, who placed seventh at Medina; while the junior Jones was champion at Olentangy and Marion Harding before taking fifth at Wadsworth.

One of the two remaining returning state qualifiers, the junior Fenton, exits the district at Kettering Fairmont. He started the season up at 220 pounds, where he was third at the GMVWA and fourth at Beavercreek; since the drop, he was champion at Mason and runner-up at the GMC. The champion at that GMC meet, fellow junior Traub, leads the rankings in this district; he also was champion at SWOWCA, Fairfield, and Milford. Additional ranked wrestlers in this district include Brock, who placed third at SWOWCA and fifth at Brecksville while up at 220, while in this weight class finished fifth at CIT and third at Delaware Hayes. Rounding out the ranked group is the junior Kemp, who has placed in five tournaments this season, the highest being a runner-up finish at Mason (loss 3-2 to Fenton in the final).

Last among the districts here is the one at Mentor, which has just three ranked wrestlers, including a returning state qualifier (Martin) as the third of them. The junior Martin made state last year up a weight at 220, and was navigating some issues early in the year when he placed fourth at North Canton

and going two-and-out at Brecksville. Since then, he was third at Top Gun (3-2 loss to Durieux in the semifinal) and won the Hephner to find his form. Leading the way here is the senior Durieux, a returning district placer, who was one match from placing at the Beast, fourth at Medina and Delaware Hayes, and a Top Gun champion. The other ranked wrestler is fellow senior Conway, who was third at Solon and the CIT and fifth at Brecksville. Returning district placers Jimmy Suhayda (Brecksville) and Johnson are not ranked within the top 17 at this weight.

220 pounds

1. Jonathan Jones, St. Xavier, senior (K. Fairmont)
2. Parker Knapp, St. Edward, senior (Cleveland State)
3. James Ford, Worthington Kilbourne, senior (H. Darby)
4. Jack Meyer, Moeller, junior (K. Fairmont)
5. Noel Caraballo, Olmsted Falls, junior (Cleveland State)
6. Sheldon Sims, Mason, senior (K. Fairmont)
7. Jacob Daniel, Stebbins, senior (K. Fairmont)
8. Jeff Virden, New Philadelphia, senior (Mentor)
9. Marshall Messer, Fremont Ross, junior (Cleveland State)
10. Connor Slade, Olentangy, senior (H. Darby)
11. Tyler Koester, Oregon Clay, senior (Cleveland State)
12. Amir Mansour, Hilliard Davidson, senior (H. Darby)
13. Paul Gilmore, Eastlake North, senior (Mentor)
14. Ras Lumpkins, Dublin Scioto, junior (H. Darby)
15. Eddie Sternad, Brecksville, junior (Mentor)
16. Ryan Durham, Lakota East, senior (K. Fairmont)
17. Brian McNamara, Aurora, senior (Mentor)

CSU – Knapp, Caraballo, Messer, Koester; Paul Sturm (Avon, junior)

HD – Ford, Slade, Mansour, Lumpkins; Sterling Roseberry (Dublin Coffman, junior)

KF – Jones, Meyer, Sims, Daniel; Durham

MEN – Virden, Gilmore, Sternad, McNamara; Floyd Rogers (Green, junior), Matt Slater (Hudson, junior)

Just five wrestlers in this weight class possess state tournament experience, which is the least of any weight in this division. The first three ranking positions, and four of the first five, are occupied by such wrestlers. Top of the field in this weight is the highest returning state placer, the senior Jones, who is an excellent football player in his own right. While all the attention on the St. Xavier defense went to Ohio State signee Justin Hilliard, many who follow prep football suggested that it was Jones who was the better high school linebacker between the two. On the wrestling mat, he has titles at Olentangy (13-5 over Ford in the final), SWOWCA, Troy, and the CIT to his credit this season.

Four other ranked wrestlers join Jones in the Kettering Fairmont district. Leading that challenge group is the junior Meyer, who was runner-up to Jones at both SWOWCA (loss by fall in OT) and CIT (1-0); in addition, Meyer was fifth at Ironman and seventh at Powerade. Next on the list is returning state alternate Sims, who was third at Olentangy Liberty and the Dvorak before winning titles at Groveport Madison and Mason. The fourth state spot in this district is occupied by the senior Daniel, who was fifth at the GMVWA, third at Beaver creek, and runner-up at Mason; while also ranked here is Durham, a runner-up at the GMC in this weight class after also taking second at SWOWCA up at 285.

Three of the others with state experience come from the Cleveland State district. Leading the way is returning state placer, and 2013 Junior freestyle All-American, Knapp. He was third at the Ironman losing in overtime to Ford during the early rounds; but since then was champion at Medina and runner-up at the Cheesehead, losing an 8-7 match to a nationally ranked wrestler from Iowa. The junior Caraballo won a match at the state tournament last year, and this year was third at Medina before winning the Bill Dies; while Messer qualified for state two years ago as a freshman at Clyde, and this year lost in overtime to state placer Richards at Oregon Clay before having to default from that tournament. The fourth ranked wrestler at this district tournament is the senior Koester, who has been a runner-up in four different tournaments this year, while going two-and-out at the Ironman and Brecksville.

The other returning state qualifier is Ironman runner-up Ford, who was also runner-up at Olentangy and the Top Gun (5-4 to projected Division II champion Dodd). He anchors a Hilliard Darby district that features three other ranked wrestlers. Next on the ladder in this district is fellow senior Slade, who won a title at Delaware Hayes (12-7 over Mansour), while placing at three major tournaments this season. Returning state alternate Mansour was runner-up at Delaware Hayes; while the junior Lumpkins was third at Olentangy, champion at Marion Harding, and second at Dublin Scioto.

Four ranked wrestlers exit the Mentor district, though none possess state experience. Leading the way is returning district placer Virden, who was champion at Smithville before finishing second at both Hudson and the ECOL. Returning state alternate Gilmore is next, though he missed Solon and Kenston, and I haven't seen his name in any brackets this year. The junior Sternad, who earned match-clinching wins in both the state dual semifinal and final for Brecksville, placed fourth at Brecksville and fifth at the Bill Dies; while it's rounded out by McNamara, who was champion at Aurora and third at Hudson.

285 pounds

1. Kevin Vough, Elyria, sophomore (Cleveland State)
2. Kameron Teacher, Central Crossing, junior (H. Darby)
3. Nik Urban, Willoughby South, junior (Mentor)
4. Aaron Crosby, Valley Forge, senior (Mentor)
5. Josh Burger, Aurora, junior (Mentor)
6. Cale Bonner, Perrysburg, senior (Cleveland State)
7. Chris Crumb, Olentangy, junior (H. Darby)
8. Ryan Cloud, Northmont, senior (K. Fairmont)
9. Gage Archer, Westerville North, senior (H. Darby)
10. Joe Hensley, Moeller, junior (K. Fairmont)
11. Jovahn Fair, Firestone, senior (Cleveland State)
12. Brennen Sawicki, Dublin Scioto, senior (H. Darby)
13. Tristen Roberts, Massillon, senior (Mentor)
14. Arman Samouk, Copley, junior (Cleveland State)
15. Christian Eubanks, Reynoldsburg, senior (H. Darby)
16. Matt Carrick, Massillon Perry, sophomore (Mentor)

CSU – Vough, Bonner, Fair, Samouk; Mike O'Malley (St. Edward, junior)

HD – Teacher, Crumb, Archer, Sawicki; Eubanks

KF – Cloud, Hensley, Tristen Taylor (Tecumseh, senior), Trevor Jackson (Xenia, senior); Joe Isham (Elder, senior)

MEN – Urban, Crosby, Burger, Roberts; Carrick

Rare is it that we talk about “youth” at heavyweight. However, that’s the theme this year in the big-school division. Of the eight returning state qualifiers, four are non-seniors, while three of the four returning state placers are non-seniors. In addition, four of the other eight ranked wrestlers are non-seniors, which means things set up for a really interesting 285 class next year.

The favorite in this weight class is the sophomore Vough, who placed third at state last year, and was a Cadet National double finalist (Greco-Roman champion) this summer. He is undefeated this season, with titles at the Ironman, Bill Dies, and the NOC. Eleven of thirteen matches in those tournaments were pins, with the other two being a 7-0 decision and a 15-1 major decision. Vough also has a 3-0 dual meet victory over Bonner, who he beat in last year’s state consolation final, from early February.

His primary challenger is a wrestler that went 2-2 at the district tournament last year a sophomore in Teacher, who is undefeated on the season with titles at North Canton, Medina, Oregon Clay, Delaware Hayes, and Central Crossing. Notable wins include 9-6 over projected Division II runner-up Loughman, a 12-1 major decision over Bonner, a pin and major decision against the projected Division III finalists.

Four other ranked wrestlers join Teacher in district competition at Hilliard Darby, most notably among them is a trio of returning state qualifiers. The junior Crumb was runner-up at North Canton and Delaware Hayes to Teacher (forfeit and 3-1 respectively); the senior Archer was fourth at Medina (losing 6-2 to Teacher in the semifinal) and has a 5-1 dual meet victory over Hensley; while the senior Sawicki made a mid-season return to the mats in placing at Marion County. The other ranked wrestler in this district is fellow senior Eubanks, fourth at North Canton, champion at Kenston, and fifth at Oregon Clay.

The other deep district in this weight class is at Mentor, where there are five ranked wrestlers, three possessing state experience. The junior Urban leads the way here, placing sixth at state after winning this district last year. On the season, he was champion at Solon (pinning Fair), Olentangy Liberty, and Eastlake North (beating Burger) before finishing third at the Hephner (5-1 to Cary). Burger, another junior, was runner-up at this district last year before placing eighth at state; this year he was runner-up at Aurora (4-3 loss to Crosby), Brecksville (4-2 to projected Division III champ Veller), and Eastlake North while winning titles at Hudson and CVC.

Also a returning state qualifier is the senior Roberts, who was third at the Gorman. Fellow senior Crosby was a district placer last year, but has been excellent this season with wins over state placers in both the Aurora and North Coast Classic finals; while his only loss came to Vough in the NOC final. Last among the ranked wrestlers is the sophomore Carrick, who was fourth at the Beast, seventh at Medina, and eighth at Top Gun, and third at Delaware Hayes.

Circling back to Vough, three other ranked wrestlers exit the district at Cleveland State with him, led by returning fourth place finisher Bonner. An all-state football player, he had a delayed start to the season after suffering an injury. Since the return, he was third at Brecksville (2-0 semifinal loss to Burger), along with runner-up finishes at Perrysburg (pinned by Veller) and Oregon Clay. Two returning state alternates, the senior Fair and the junior Samouk, round out the ranked group. Fair was runner-up at Solon, champion at Toledo St. John’s, and third at the Bill Dies; while Samouk was runner-up at Perry and the Hephner, along with a fifth place finish at the Bill Dies.

Closing it out is the shallow Kettering Fairmont district, which has just two ranked wrestlers in the senior Cloud and the junior Hensley. Cloud was a district placer last year, and this year is undefeated with dominant tournament titles at GMVWA, Troy, Valley View, and Eaton; while Hensley won titles at SWOWCA and the CIT, with a third place finish at Powerade.

Team Board

1. St. Edward
2. Massillon Perry (status of Phillips x-factor)
3. Brecksville
4. Elyria
5. Wadsworth (status of Randolph x-factor)
6. Central Crossing
7. Mason
8. Brunswick
9. Oregon Clay
10. Moeller

Division II

106 pounds

1. Justin Stickley, St. Paris Graham, junior (C. Southeastern)
2. Josh Venia, Toledo Central Catholic, junior (Mansfield)
3. Matthew Cardello, Canfield, freshman (Alliance)
4. Bruce Hrynciw, Oak Harbor, sophomore (Mansfield)
5. Terrell Grant, Tallmadge, senior (Alliance)
6. Brandon Lucas, Western Brown, freshman (C. Southeastern)
7. Alex Potts, East Liverpool, senior (Heath)
8. Jashon Hubbard, Steubenville, freshman (Heath)
9. Eric Bartos, Buckeye, sophomore (Mansfield)
10. Lucas Stricker, Hoban, sophomore (Alliance)
11. Hunter Ryan, Lake Catholic, freshman (Alliance)
12. Alec Schopfer, West Branch, senior (Alliance)
13. Addison Fogle, Licking Valley, freshman (Heath)
14. Nate Keaton, Circleville, freshman (C. Southeastern)
15. Jared Stevens, Gallia Academy, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
16. Gannon Petrullo, Dover, sophomore (Heath)
17. Carson Speelman, Mansfield Madison, sophomore (Mansfield)

ALL – Cardello, Grant, Stricker, Ryan; Schopfer

CSE – Stickley, Lucas, Keaton, Stevens; Noah Barnett (Sheridan, freshman)

HEA – Potts, Hubbard, Fogle, Petrullo; Briar Cadle (Claymont, freshman)

MAN – Venia, Hrynciw, Bartos, Speelman; Danny Assaf (Defiance, sophomore)

Let's throw it back to March of 1979 for a moment, a time where no one knew that there was a St. Paris, Ohio. It was that year when Jim Jordan won the Class AA title at 98 pounds by a 5-4 decision over Scott Keil as a freshman. Three seasons later, he would win a fourth state title, younger brother Jeff won what was his third title, and teammate Scott Owens finished runner-up in the weight between them. With just those three place-winners, St. Paris Graham won a state title under head coach Ron McCunn.

Over 35 years later, much has changed, but there are a few things remaining the same. First, there is a St. Paris Graham wrestler favored to win the opening weight class. Second, the Falcons will win the state title. The head coach now is Jeff Jordan, who was in eighth grade in 1979, and took over as the head coach after McCunn won the Falcons a third state title in 2001 (1998 was the second). From that first state title, the program now has 74 individual state champions in all. Along with St. Edward, they are the standard bearers of high school wrestling in Ohio.

The junior Stickley placed sixth at this weight class last year, after it was his older brother Eli finishing third in the opening weight the year before. This season, he placed fifth at the Ironman and won tournament titles at the GMVWA, Wadsworth, and New Lexington. While he is not the highest returning place-winner in this weight class, Stickley did beat that wrestler (Josh Venia) in consolation at the Walsh Ironman by 7-5 decision.

Stickley heads a district at Chillicothe Southeastern that features three other ranked wrestlers, including returning state qualifier Stevens, and a pair of freshmen in Lucas and Keaton. Lucas won a title at Western Brown and finished third at Franklin (113) and GMVWA; while Keaton beat Stevens to win the

title at Miami Trace, along with placing third at Olentangy Liberty and Western Brown. Stevens has lost twice to Keaton this season, and does have a head-on loss to another freshman in this district, Barnett by 12-8 score in late January.

Fellow junior Venia is the highest returning placer, finishing third last year at state, including a 4-3 ultimate tiebreaker victory over Stickley in the quarterfinal. He went 3-2 at the Ironman and finished runner-up at the CIT while competing at 106; up at 113, Venia was champion at Solon, runner-up at the TRAC, and fell a match short of placing at Brecksville. His district has three other ranked wrestlers, all sophomore, including a pair that were one match away from making state last year – Hrynciw and Bartos. The sophomore Hrynciw was champion at Medina in this weight class, while winning titles at Bellevue and Perrysburg up at 113; fellow sophomore Bartos placed seventh at Medina and fourth at the Bill Dies in this weight, while winning at Beachwood and his league tournament up at 113.

The freshman star in this weight is Cardello, a junior high state champion last year at 102 pounds. He exits the Alliance district, and this season was runner-up at Brecksville to the nationally ranked Mattin before winning titles at the Bill Dies and EOWL tournaments. At the district level, he is joined by four other ranked wrestlers, including returning state qualifier Grant, who placed at the Ironman and the Beast of the East (also finishing third at the Bill Dies). Returning state alternate Stricker was champion at Hudson and the NCL (where he beat the freshman Ryan), and runner-up to Cardello at the Bill Dies. Schopfer is a senior, and was a go-to-state match loser two years ago in this weight class; he has placed in three major tournaments this season (North Canton, GMVWA, and Top Gun).

Rounding out the districts is the one at Heath, which is led by returning state qualifier Potts, who won the OVAC title up at 113 before dropping here in winning a title at Wellsville. In that Wellsville tournament, he beat the freshman Hubbard, a fellow OVAC champion; he also was fourth at North Canton, and has an upset pin over Cardello in late January. Those two are joined by the freshman Fogle, a placer at Brecksville earlier this season, and the sophomore Petrullo.

113 pounds

1. Mitch Moore, St. Paris Graham, freshman (C. Southeastern)
2. Ana Abduljelil, Whitehall, junior (Heath)
3. Hunter Kosco, Canal Fulton Northwest, sophomore (Alliance)
4. Tony Decesare, Padua, junior (Alliance)
5. Blaine Hunter, Elida, junior (Mansfield)
6. Maxx Peters, Claymont, freshman (Heath)
7. Gunner Carpenter, Licking Valley, freshman (Heath)
8. Aaron Kelly, Rocky River, junior (Mansfield)
9. Nathaniel Kehn, Sheridan, senior (C. Southeastern)
10. Cole Bailey, Ravenna Southeast, freshman (Alliance)
11. Charlie Nash, Norwalk, junior (Mansfield)
12. Dante Ginnetti, Poland, junior (Alliance)
13. Mauricio Barajas, Wauseon, freshman (Mansfield)
14. Brady Toth, Perry, junior (Alliance)
15. Jack Dawson, Beaver Local, senior (Heath)
16. Jake Ondash, Crestwood, junior (Alliance)

ALL – Kosco, Decesare, Bailey, Ginnetti; Toth, Ondash

CSE – Moore, Kehn, T.J. Newsome (New Lexington, junior), Jaylin Cameron (Urbana, junior); Max Neiling (Bellbrook, freshman)

HEA – Abduljelil, Peters, Carpenter, Dawson; Jordan Anthony (Buckeye Valley, junior)

MAN – Hunter, Kelly, Nash, Barajas; Mike Baumberger (Mansfield Madison, sophomore)

Continuing our narrative in the Graham Invitational, one of the major themes has been standout freshmen through the years. Jim and Jeff Jordan were the second and third four-time state champions in Ohio high school wrestling. Since then, three other wrestlers have won all four of their state titles in the Black, Grey, and White – David Taylor (one of the best wrestler this state has ever seen), Bo Jordan, and Micah Jordan. Additional wrestlers to win state as freshmen while competing for the Falcons include Ty Morgan, Dustin Schlatter, Ben Jordan, Alex Marinelli, and Kyle Lawson.

Another should be added to the rolls this year, as the phenom Mitch Moore is a strong favorite in this weight class. In the pre-season, the two-time junior high state champion placed fifth at the prestigious Super 32 Challenge. He then made a massive breakthrough at the Walsh Ironman, where he emerged as champion with wins over a pair of top ten wrestlers in the country. Despite suffering a pair of in-season losses, 4-2 against Zach Sherman in the Blair Academy dual and 2-1 on a late takedown to state champion Noah Baughman in the Wadsworth final, Moore is still clearly above his peers in Division II.

Among those peers are a pair of two-time state placers in Abduljelil and Decesare. Decesare exits the deepest district at Alliance with five other ranked wrestlers. On the season, Decesare went 3-2 at the Ironman losing to Sherman and returning DI state placer Hart, took third at Brecksville, and second at the CIT. The favorite at the Alliance district is the sophomore Kosco, who placed fifth at state last year and has titles at Brecksville and Top Gun to his credit; his two losses on the season (North Canton and Delaware Hayes finals) are to Division I state title contender Mattox.

The other four ranked wrestlers at Alliance are in the hunt for two state tournament spots. The freshman Bailey placed seventh at Top Gun and fourth at the Hephner; Ginnetti qualified for state two years ago as a freshman, with tournament placements including eighth at Top Gun and third at the Hephner; the junior Toth qualified for state last year, and has runner-up finishes at the North Coast and CVC tournaments this year; while fellow junior Ondash was fourth at Solon and sixth at Kenston.

Abduljelil is in his third year at this weight class, placing fifth two years ago and seventh last year. In his major tournament this season, he was fifth at Medina losing 12-10 in the tiebreaker to Mattox and 3-0 to another returning state placer. He is joined by three other ranked wrestlers, including a pair of freshmen in Peters and Carpenter, who both placed at junior high state last year; Peters was seventh at Medina and third at the Top Gun. The other ranked wrestler is the senior Dawson, a state alternate last year in this weight class who placed third at the EOWL meet.

Moore is joined by just one other ranked wrestler in his district at Chillicothe Southeastern, returning state qualifier Kehn. The senior went two-and-out in this weight class last year at state, and his season placed fourth at Medina and seventh at the Bill Dies.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Mansfield that features four ranked wrestlers, including a pair of returning state placers in Hunter and Nash; Hunter was champion at Tiffin Columbian, while Nash was fifth at Oregon Clay. Another pair of wrestlers in this district weight are returning state qualifiers, Kelly

and Baumberger; while the other mentioned wrestler is the freshman Barajas, who placed sixth at Oregon Clay, including a head-on win over Baumberger.

120 pounds

1. Tyler Warner, Claymont, junior (Heath)
2. Eli Stickley, St. Paris Graham, senior (C. Southeastern)
3. Tariq Wilson, Steubenville, junior (Heath)
4. Seth Beard, Napoleon, junior (Mansfield)
5. Alize Merrell, Mansfield Madison, senior (Mansfield)
6. Mike Stewart, Sparta Highland, senior (Heath)
7. Kevon Freeman, Lake Catholic, freshman (Alliance)
8. Nick Berry, Dayton Carroll, junior (C. Southeastern)
9. Juwan Minnefield, Perkins, junior (Mansfield)
10. Luke Wymer, Akron SVSM, freshman (Alliance)
11. Casey Ragle, Norwood, freshman (C. Southeastern)
12. Dylan Mansor, Oak Harbor, sophomore (Mansfield)
13. Taylor Steele, Wilmington, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
14. Hunter Deshon, Coventry, junior (Alliance)
15. Corey Pastiva, Ravenna Southeast, junior (Alliance)
16. Ryan Lantow, Defiance, senior (Mansfield)

ALL – Freeman, Wymer, Deshon, Pastiva; Eric Gerback (Marlington, sophomore)

CHSE – Stickley, Berry, Ragle, Steele; Andrew Spicer (New Lexington, junior)

HEA – Warner, Wilson, Stewart, Justin Shaw (Carrollton, freshman); Mitchell Giffen (Indian Valley, junior)

MAN – Beard, Merrell, Minnefield, Mansor; Lantow

We interrupt the Graham Invitational to discuss the journey of a potential four-time state champion in Tyler Warner. As a freshman his state title run was not easy, 3-2 in the quarters, 9-7 in the semifinal, and an ultimate tiebreaker victory in the final. Last year's state title run was easier. However, life will not be easy this year with another defending state champion in his weight class – the senior Eli Stickley of St. Paris Graham. It should be noted that over the previous seven state tournaments (2008-2014), five of those years saw a weight class where two past state champions were present.

Both wrestlers placed in the Super 32 Challenge in the pre-season and the Walsh Ironman, with Stickley placing higher in both events (4th vs. 6th at the Super 32, 2nd vs. 5th at the Ironman). A pair of St. Paris Graham wrestlers have seen their four-timer track derailed in the junior campaign, Ty Morgan in 1998 with an opening round loss, and Ben Jordan with a state finals loss in 2007 to Jeff Pelton. The reverse could very easily happen this year, where Stickley derails Warner of a third title in his junior season.

The pick in this weight class, based on season-long excellence, is going to be Warner. Even before the state tournament, he'll be challenged in the district at Heath, where returning state runner-up Wilson (lost to Stickley in the final last year) will join Warner. The other ranked wrestler there is returning state qualifier Stewart. For the season, Warner was also champion at Medina (3-0 over Beard in a rematch of his freshman year state final) and the Top Gun (ultimate tiebreaker over fellow state champion Mackall). On the season Wilson was champion at North Canton, OVAC, and Wellsville; while Stewart placed fifth at Medina and finished runner-up at New Lexington.

Stickley will go unchallenged at the district level. Though there are three other ranked wrestlers, none having state experience. After finishing second at the Ironman, Stickley had a couple of bad losses around the New Year; 8-6 to Branson in the GMVWA semifinal, and then losing to van der Merwe in the Blair Academy dual meet. He has since bounced back with titles at Wadsworth and New Lexington, though both were quite frankly expected. Among the trio of ranked challengers at Chillicothe Southeastern, Bery placed sixth at Medina and second at the CIT; the freshman Ragle was fourth at SWOWCA; while Steele was champion at Bellbrook, Western Brown, and Miami Trace.

The third district with a wrestler possessing separation criteria is the one at Mansfield, as it's two-time state placer Beard (runner-up as a freshman two years ago and third last year). On the season, he was runner-up to Warner at Medina, with titles at Perrysburg and the NLL. His district features four other ranked wrestlers, including a pair that have made previous state tournament appearances in Merrell and Minnefield. Merrell qualified for state two years ago before not wrestling much (if at all) last season. This has been a positive season for him, fourth at Medina, sixth at Oregon Clay, with titles at the Gorman and OCC tournaments. The junior Minnefield made state last year, and placed third at the Gorman after not placing at Medina (including a 3-2 early round loss to Merrell). Mansor and Lantow both lost go-to-state matches last year.

Rounding out the quartet of districts is the one at Alliance, which features zero wrestlers that have even appeared in a go-to-match. It is a pair of freshmen leading the ladder here with Freeman and Wymer. Freeman was runner-up at Solon in this weight class, and runner-up at the CIT up at 126; while Wymer won a title at Lorain, placed seventh at Medina, and was fifth at the Top Gun.

126 pounds

1. Eli Seipel, St. Paris Graham, senior (C. Southeastern)
2. Georgio Poullas, Canfield, sophomore (Alliance)
3. Devin Rogers, Springfield Northwestern, senior (Mansfield)
4. Cole Tawney, Gallia Academy, senior (C. Southeastern)
5. Sandro Ramirez, Wauseon, freshman (Mansfield)
6. Cole Woods, West Holmes, junior (Heath)
7. Lane Peters, Claymont, junior (Heath)
8. Cory Simpson, Field, junior (Alliance)
9. Paul Petras, Padua, senior (Alliance)
10. Levi Congleton, Vincent Warren, senior (C. Southeastern)
11. Dominic Vagnier, Logan Elm, senior (C. Southeastern)
12. Rosendo Beltran, Toledo Central Catholic, junior (Mansfield)
13. John Chell, Akron SVSM, senior (Alliance)
14. Nick Bergman, Oak Harbor, senior (Mansfield)
15. Kyle Bussard, Valley View, senior (C. Southeastern)
16. Brian Persinger, Triway, sophomore (Alliance)

ALL – Poullas, Simpson, Petras, Chell; Persinger

CHSE – Seipel, Tawney, Congleton, Vagnier; Bussard

HEA – Woods, Peters, Eli Ayoub (Jonathan Alder, junior), Cody Oiler (East Liverpool, senior); Dustin Martsof (Beaver Local, junior)

MAN – Rogers, Ramirez, Beltran, Bergman; Thurston Dyer (Upper Sandusky, junior)

Given that there is no question about St. Paris Graham winning the state title, there have to be some questions for them to answer. One would be how many individuals win their weight class. The record for state champions and points scored at the state tournament was accomplished by Graham in 2009 (seven champs and 282 points). If the Falcons are to reach those heights this year, it would help them if 2013 state champion Seipel returned to the top step of the podium after finishing third last year. Should this year's Ironman champ achieve the feat, it would cap off a 4-1-3-1 career for him.

Though Seipel is the favorite, he suffered a head-on loss to the second-ranked wrestler in this weight class the weekend after the Ironman. Since then, he added titles at the GMVWA (3-1 finals victory over two-time state champ Hancock), Wadsworth, and New Lexington; however, there was a 6-5 blemish to future college teammate L.J. Bentley in a mid-January dual meet. He also exits the deepest district with four other ranked wrestlers at Chillicothe Southeastern.

The senior Tawney is already a two-time state placer, fifth two years ago and eighth last year. This season, he has titles at Gallia, Western Brown, and (at 132) Vinton County. In winning the Western Brown title, he beat returning state placer Rogers 6-3; his lone blemish is a major decision loss up at 132 to the freshman Yinger. Also here is 2013 state qualifier Congleton, who was runner-up at Miami Trace to Tawney after beating returning state placer Vagnier by 6-4 decision, and has won two other tournaments in higher weight classes. Vagnier placed fourth at state last year, but that was in one of the weakest Division II weight classes ever; while the senior Bussard qualified for state two years ago, and has titles at Franklin and Valley View this season.

Poullas, the second ranked wrestler in this weight, exits the other district tournament with five ranked wrestlers in all. This season, he lost 6-2 to Division I favorite Assad in the Bill Dies final; while up at 132 pounds, he was third at Brecksville with titles at Perry and EOWL to his credit. Two other returning state placers are in the field at Alliance: two-time placer Simpson, who was third at Wadsworth after failing to place in the Top Gun; and the senior Petras, who was eighth at Brecksville and third at the CIT. Returning state qualifier Persinger was runner-up at Smithville to Woods before failing to place at the Top Gun, while Chell placed eighth at Top Gun with titles at Lorain and the Hephner to his credit. There is an additional returning state qualifier, Isaiah Ngrairingas (Conneaut), who is not ranked.

The remaining two top five ranked wrestlers exit the district at Mansfield, along with another pair of wrestlers possessing state experience. The senior Rogers placed fourth at state last year, splitting matches with Seipel along the way. This season, he won a title at North Canton up at 132 before finishing runner-up at Western Brown in his debut at this weight class. The freshman Ramirez was a junior high state champ last year, placing fifth at Brecksville and third at Oregon Clay this season. The junior Beltran qualified for state last year, and has tournament titles at Solon, CIT, and TRAC to his credit; while fellow junior Dyer has made state in each year of high school, and has titles at Tiffin Columbian (at 132) and Marion Pleasant. Dyer is in danger of not making state this year with the senior Bergman, a returning state alternate, ranked ahead of him.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Heath, which features just two ranked wrestlers, though each is a returning state placer. The junior Woods was runner-up in that hideous 120 pound weight class last year; this year he was champion at Smithville and the OCC, while taking fifth at Top Gun. Fellow junior Peters placed at 113 last year, and this year was sixth at Medina and seventh at the Top Gun.

132 pounds

1. Cameron Kelly, Bellbrook, senior (C. Southeastern)
2. Rocky Jordan, St. Paris Graham, freshman (C. Southeastern)
3. Garrett Carter, Akron SVSM, senior (Alliance)
4. Brandon Leynaud, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
5. Gage Grunden, Defiance, freshman (Mansfield)
6. Shawn Murphy, Washington C.H., senior (C. Southeastern)
7. Tyler Copeland, Wapakoneta, sophomore (Mansfield)
8. Brennan Joseph, Marlinton, junior (Alliance)
9. Dakotah Goff, Steubenville, junior (Heath)
10. C.J. Frost, Canfield, junior (Alliance)
11. Chandler Golec, Claymont, sophomore (Heath)
12. Jason Keyes, Beaver Local, junior (Heath)
13. Vince Zitiello, Bay, junior (Mansfield)
14. Hunter Yackee, Wauseon, freshman (Mansfield)
15. Anthony Vetturini, West Geauga, senior (Alliance)
16. Trevor Scherf, Oak Harbor, sophomore (Mansfield)

ALL – Carter, Joseph, Frost, Vetturini; Luke McKeon (Lake Catholic, freshman)

CSE – Kelly, Jordan, Murphy, Cayne Bennett (Sheridan, senior); Adam Wilhelm (Dayton Carroll, senior)

HEA – Goff, Golec, Keyes, Gabe Gibson (Bloom Carroll, junior); Ben Van Wey (John Glenn, senior)

MAN – Leynaud, Grunden, Copeland, Zitiello; Yackee, Scherf

The last link on the Jordan legacy starts his state tournament career in this weight class. Jim was a four-time state champion, with both of his sons being three-time state champions (Ben losing in the state final to Pelton in 2007 as a junior, and Isaac losing in the state semifinals to Ty Mitch in 2009 as a freshman; despite me projecting them to win state in each year). Jeff was a four-time state champion, with Bo and Micah already winning four state titles, and Rocky is a freshman.

Rocky has finished runner-up twice already to a wrestler in this state tournament weight class this season, losing the Ironman and GMVWA finals to the senior Kelly (3-1 and 4-1). He also had a major blip of form in mid-January, losing decisively to the top two ranked wrestlers in Division I (Ladnier 9-1 in a dual meet and Furnas 15-8 in the Wadsworth semifinal). However blips in form and skepticism mean nothing to the Jordan family heading into the state tournament.

Just look back to Ben's freshman year state title, when he failed to win the GMVWA and narrowly escaped a 3-2 opening round match against district four Eric Morrow of West Branch. He would win the 119 pound weight class with an 11-10 semifinal victory over returning state runner-up Quentin Keyes of Walsh Jesuit, before knocking off defending state champion Adam Kriwinsky of University School 8-4.

The senior Kelly won state as a freshman in 2012 before finishing runner-up each of the last two years (2013 to Seipel, 2014 to Tutolo), and is undefeated this season. He won the Ironman and GMVWA tournaments, with semifinal wins over two-time state champion Ganger on each occasion; and has added titles at Bellbrook and (at 138) Eaton since. It is highly likely Kelly will become a four-time state finalist, which is an accomplishment in and of itself. Kelly and Jordan exit the district at Chillicothe Southeastern, where there is just one other ranked wrestler, the senior Murphy, a returning state alternate.

The only other returning state placer in this weight class is the senior Carter, twice seventh in the state, and this season has placed third at both Medina and the Hephner. Three other ranked wrestlers join him at the Alliance district, including returning state qualifiers Joseph and Frost. Joseph was sixth at the Top Gun and runner-up at the Hephner; while Frost competed much of the year at 138 (8th Brecksville, 2nd Perry, champion EOWL), but will be here in the post-season. Given the climate at 138, there is the possibility of another dropper.

The deepest district is the one at Mansfield with six ranked wrestlers, led by returning state qualifier Leynaud and the freshman Grunden. Leynaud was champion at the Gorman and OCC tournaments, third at Oregon Clay, and has head-on victory over Grunden from December; the freshman Grunden won junior high state last year, was fourth at the GMVWA, and runner-up at Perrysburg. Two others at this site are also returning state qualifiers, Zitiello and the not mentioned Luke Leonard (Fostoria).

Last among the districts in this weight class is the one at Heath with three ranked wrestlers. The junior Goff is a returning state alternate, who this season beat Keyes to win the OVAC, also won a title at Wellsville, and has an 8-4 victory over Frost from late January. Returning state qualifier Golec placed eighth at Medina and the Top Gun; while 2013 state qualifier Keyes was runner-up at the OVAC and third at the EOWL.

138 pounds

1. Nate Hagan, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
2. Ryan Thomas, St. Paris Graham, freshman (C. Southeastern)
3. Nick Wrobel, Crestwood, senior (Alliance)
4. Joe Koontz, Akron SVSM, sophomore (Alliance)
5. Drew Kinzel, Clear Fork, senior (Mansfield)
6. Ryan Bennett, CVCA, senior (Alliance)
7. Jake Martinez, Licking Valley, sophomore (Heath)
8. Bryson Laytart, Miami Trace, senior (C. Southeastern)
9. Chuck Mikelait, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
10. Matt Steer, West Branch, sophomore (Alliance)
11. Jeremy Balboa, Oak Harbor, senior (Mansfield)
12. Tyler Jenkins, Meadowbrook, senior (Heath)
13. Matt Salmon, Perkins, senior (Mansfield)
14. Ashton Eyler, West Holmes, freshman (Heath)
15. Brett Bailey, Ravenna Southeast, junior (Alliance)
16. Alex Kowal, Bishop Fenwick, sophomore (C. Southeastern)

ALL – Wrobel, Koontz, Bennett, Steer; Bailey

CHSE – Thomas, Laytart, Kowal, Kevin Beal (Fairfield Union, junior); D.J. White (Logan Elm, senior)

HEA – Martinez, Jenkins, Eyler, Jesse Hubbard (Steubenville, sophomore); Joey Knipp (Carrollton, junior)

MAN – Hagan, Kinzel, Mikelait, Balboa; Salmon

The third elite freshman on the St. Paris Graham team this year is ranked second in this weight class, two-time junior high state champion Thomas. Despite failing to make the second day at the Ironman, he has a bright future; the losses on that Friday were by fall to National Prep runner-up Verallis and 3-2 to Division III favorite Carr. In his next major event, Thomas beat projected state runners-up Demas (7-3) and Ford (6-3) to win the GMVWA; while he placed third at Wadsworth, losing 5-0 to defending state champ Screptock in the semifinal.

The returning state champion in this weight class, and projected to repeat, is the senior Hagan. The Edinboro-bound grappler beat Brent Moore of St. Paris Graham 3-1 in overtime to win the 132 state title. This season, he placed eighth at the Ironman, third at Brecksville, has titles in three tournaments, and beat Thomas 5-3 in the state dual meet final. The rivalry with fellow state champion Screenshot has continued; Hagan won the Solon final in the tiebreaker, lost the Brecksville semifinal in overtime, and lost in the tiebreaker in a January dual meet.

Four other ranked wrestlers join Hagan at the Mansfield district, two of them have state experience. 2013 qualifier Kinzel was champion at North Canton and the OCC, while taking second at the Gorman; fellow senior Balboa won a title at Bellevue, while earning fifth at Medina, along with a fourth at Perrysburg and Oregon Clay. Mikelait is 2-1 against Balboa this season, and was runner-up to Kinzel at the OCC; though he lost in the consolation semifinal at the Gorman to Salmon (who took fourth at both Medina and the Gorman).

The other district featuring five ranked wrestlers, at present, is at Alliance. Returning state placer Wrobel is the sole state experienced wrestler in that lot. He spent much of this season at 145, where he is undefeated with titles at Solon, Kenston, and the Bill Dies. It is entirely possible that Wrobel ends up on the raised mat Saturday night at the Schott getting his hand raised. Fellow senior Bennett placed at state as a freshman and sophomore before blowing weight last year at the district tournament, and has continued mixed form this year; semifinalist down to sixth at North Canton, failing to place at Brecksville, and runner-up at North Canton. The sophomore Koontz was a state alternate last year, champion at Medina, third at the Top Gun (losing 9-1 to Bennett along the way), and champion at the Hephner. Rounding out the lot are fellow go-to-state match losers Steer and Bailey.

At Chillicothe Southeastern, Thomas is joined by just two other ranked wrestlers, returning state qualifier Laytart and the sophomore Kowal. This season, Laytart was runner-up at Beavercreek and champion at Miami Trace, after failing to place at Brecksville; while Kowal was champion at Fenwick.

The Heath district features three ranked wrestlers, including a pair of returning state qualifiers in Martinez and Jenkins (the OVAC champion). The other ranked wrestler is the freshman Eyler, who placed sixth at the Top Gun and third at the OCC after losing to Mikelait in the semifinal.

145 pounds

1. Wade Hodges, Wauseon, senior (Mansfield)
2. Brent Moore, St. Paris Graham, junior (C. Southeastern)
3. Andy Dobben, CVCA, senior (Alliance)
4. Kyle Kaminski, Padua, senior (Alliance)
5. Spencer Nagy, Alliance, senior (Alliance)
6. Dallas Ambos, Wapakoneta, senior (Mansfield)
7. Rhett Petersen, Oak Harbor, junior (Mansfield)
8. Jon Watkins, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
9. Wade Smiddy, Springfield Shawnee, junior (C. Southeastern)
10. Zach Carpenter, Sheridan, senior (C. Southeastern)
11. Daniel Hasson, Beaver Local, senior (Heath)
12. Bailey Jenkins, Meadowbrook, junior (Heath)
13. Jack Peura, Tippecanoe, junior (Mansfield)
14. Chris Harris, Bellevue, senior (Mansfield)

15. Adam Kirsh, Orange, senior (Alliance)
16. Malachi Marlow, Western Brown, junior (C. Southeastern)

ALL – Dobben, Kaminski, Nagy, Kirsh; Nick Farmer (Norton, sophomore)

CHSE – Moore, Smiddy, Carpenter, Marlow; Blake Stitloh (Eaton, senior)

HEA – Hasson, Jenkins, Devin Hessler (River Valley, junior), Brenton Miller (Carrollton, sophomore); Nick Fisher (Richmond Edison, senior)

MAN – Hodges, Ambos, Petersen, Watkins; Peura, Harris

Three different wrestlers in this weight have plausible reason to believe they will be atop the podium come Saturday evening, March 14th, at the Schott. However, the pick here is the senior Hodges, a three-time state placer headed to the University of Maryland. During this season, he has narrow victories over his two direct challengers; beat returning state runner-up Moore 3-1 on a late takedown in the semifinals at the Walsh Ironman, beat two-time state placer Dobben 7-4 on a near fall from top in the ultimate tiebreaker during the Brecksville final. Additionally, Hodges has titles at Perrysburg and Oregon Clay to go with the Brecksville title and runner-up finish at the Ironman.

Hodges exits the deepest district with five other state ranked wrestlers; though none is a true threat to win the title at Mansfield, so it's a battle for the last three spots. Three of these five qualified for state last year; the senior Ambos was champion at the GMVWA and eighth at Top Gun, the junior Petersen was fourth at Medina and second at Perrysburg, while the senior Watkins was runner-up at the Gorman and fourth at Oregon Clay. The senior Harris was a go-to-state match loser last year, placing third at the Gorman; while the junior Peura has titles at Lima Senior and Western Brown to go with a runner-up finish at Eaton.

Ranked second in this state weight class is returning state runner-up Moore, who beat Hodges 2-1 in the ultimate tiebreaker in the state semi before falling 3-1 to Hagan in overtime. This season, he placed fourth at the Ironman before winning tournaments at Wadsworth and New Lexington. Moore leads a district at Chillicothe Southeastern that features three other ranked wrestlers. The junior Smiddy qualified for state as a freshman, and this season has titles at Big Walnut, Miami Trace (over Carpenter), and Eaton (over Peura). Next is the senior Carpenter, who was fifth at Medina, fourth at the Bill Dies, and runner-up at Miami Trace; while rounding out the ranked lot is the junior Marlow, who was fourth at the GMVWA and third at Western Brown.

The next three ranked wrestlers – all seniors – in this weight class all exit the district tournament at Alliance. Two-time state placer Dobben was champion at North Canton up at 152 pounds before a runner-up finish at Brecksville and Top Gun title in this weight class; his season includes a head-on win over two-time state placer Kaminski, two wins against Division I state favorite Carson, and a win over returning Division I state runner-up Steed. The previously mentioned Kaminski was fourth at Brecksville losing in the quarters to Kaminski and the consolation final to Carson, and won a title at the CIT. Ranked fifth in this weight is Nagy, a returning state alternate, seeking his first state tournament appearance; on the season, he was fifth at Top Gun and first at the EOWL.

Rounding out the four districts is the one at Heath that features just a pair of ranked wrestlers, both of whom made the state tournament last year. The senior Hasson placed sixth at Medina, won the OVAC (beating Jenkins 6-0 in the semifinal), and was runner-up at the EOWL (losing 5-2 to Nagy); while the junior Jenkins was fourth at the OVAC, runner-up at New Lexington, and champion at the ECOL meet.

152 pounds

1. Kyle Lawson, St. Paris Graham, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
2. Tyler Wiederholt, Bellbrook, junior (C. Southeastern)
3. Josh Mossing, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
4. Ben Petersen, Oak Harbor, senior (Mansfield)
5. Ben Knaus, Akron SVSM, junior (Alliance)
6. Kristian Jackson, Alliance, senior (Alliance)
7. Tyler Sowards, Kenton Ridge, senior (C. Southeastern)
8. Caleb Price, Chillicothe, senior (C. Southeastern)
9. Justice Avery, Claymont, junior (Heath)
10. Zack Lake, Coventry, senior (Alliance)
11. David Crawford, Canfield, freshman (Alliance)
12. Seth Boggs, Perkins, junior (Mansfield)
13. Aidan Pasiuk, Carrollton, sophomore (Heath)
14. Nico Moray, Steubenville, junior (Heath)
15. Christian Price, Granville, senior (Heath)
16. Derek Kuhlman, Lima Shawnee, senior (Mansfield)

ALL – Knaus, Jackson, Lake, Crawford; Hunter McPeak (Ravenna Southeast, junior)

CSE – Lawson, Wiederholt, Sowards, Caleb Price; Tyler Young (Hamilton Ross, junior)

HEA – Avery, Pasiuk, Moray, Christian Price; Louis Hetras (Dover, senior)

MAN – Mossing, Petersen, Boggs, Kuhlman; Roman Williams (Tiffin Columbian, senior)

When looking at the opening ten weight classes, ones where there is a St. Paris Graham wrestler ranked in the top three within each of them, the scary thought is only two of those wrestlers are seniors (Stickley at 120 and Seipel at 126). It includes here at 152 where returning state champion Lawson is just a sophomore. The strong favorite to repeat as state champion, this season he was seventh at the Ironman before winning titles at the GMVWA, Wadsworth, and New Lexington.

Within the district tournament at Chillicothe Southeastern, he will be joined by three other ranked wrestlers, all ranked within the top eight of this state weight class. Returning state placer Wiederholt is ranked second here, going 2-2 at the Ironman with a pair of quality wins, then following that up with a runner-up finish at the GMVWA (4-1 loss to Lawson) and titles at Bellbrook and Eaton. Returning state qualifier Sowards was third at the GMVWA (3-1 semifinal loss to Lawson), fifth at Oregon Clay, and champion at Delaware Hayes; while returning state placer Caleb Price was fourth at Olentangy Liberty and first at Miami Trace.

The other two top five ranked wrestlers in this weight class, both returning state placers, exit the district tournament at Mansfield. Mossing, state runner-up to Lawson last year at 138, has had a mixed bag of results season to date; champion at Solon, CIT and TRAC, but failing to place at Brecksville and suffering a dual meet loss to Boggs earlier this month. Fellow senior Petersen placed eight at 145 last year, and on the season won titles at Bellevue and Oregon Clay, finished sixth at Medina, and second at Perrysburg; also losing 11-2 during the opening weekend to Wiederholt. Two other ranked wrestlers exit that district tournament: returning state alternate Kuhlman, who was seventh at Brecksville and sixth at Oregon Clay, and the junior Boggs who won the Gorman.

The Alliance district features four ranked wrestlers, three of whom won matches at the state tournament last year. The junior Knaus was third at Top Gun and fifth at the Hephner; the senior

Jackson placed eighth in this weight last year at state, and has missed much of the season due to injury, but returned recently during a 5-4 dual meet loss to Avery; while fellow senior Lake was champion at the North Coast and a semifinalist at the Bill Dies. Also ranked here is the freshman Crawford, who was sixth at Brecksville, runner-up at Perry, seventh at the Bill Dies, and third at the EOWL.

Rounding out the districts, also with four ranked wrestlers is the one at Heath. It features just one returning state qualifier, the senior Price, who was runner-up at New Lexington. The junior Avery is a returning state alternate in this weight class, who placed eighth at Medina and fourth at the Top Gun; the sophomore Pasiuk was a district placer last year down four weight classes at 126, and this season placed sixth at both North Canton and the Top Gun (but gave three-time state placer Rahmani his closest match of the season outside of the Ironman or the dual meet against Lawson in the Top Gun quarter). The junior Moray placed fourth at North Canton, with a head-on win over Pasiuk, and also fourth at the OVAC.

160 pounds

1. Alex Marinelli, St. Paris Graham, junior (C. Southeastern)
2. Ben Schram, Bellbrook, senior (C. Southeastern)
3. Dalton Hartshorn, Minerva, senior (Heath)
4. Tony Rupert, Marlinton, senior (Alliance)
5. Mason Hughes, West Branch, senior (Alliance)
6. Dimitri Williams, New Lexington, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
7. Richard Jackson, Toledo Central Catholic, junior (Mansfield)
8. Austin Baker, Clyde, senior (Mansfield)
9. Christian Collins, Chillicothe, senior (C. Southeastern)
10. Ethan Fout, Licking Valley, junior (Heath)
11. Anthony Audi, Poland, junior (Alliance)
12. Eric Fasnacht, Padua, junior (Alliance)
13. Austin Brooks, Carrollton, senior (Heath)
14. Evan Schenk, Perry, sophomore (Alliance)
15. Shawn Livingston, Steubenville, junior (Heath)
16. Robbie Bowers, Defiance, sophomore (Mansfield)
17. Isaiah Davis, Indian Lake, junior (C. Southeastern)

ALL – Rupert, Hughes, Audi, Fasnacht; Schenk

CHSE – Marinelli, Schram, Williams, Collins; Davis, Travis Grooms (Miami Trace, senior)

HEA – Hartshorn, Fout, Brooks, Livingston; Josh Sokolowski (Buckeye Local, senior)

MAN – Jackson, Baker, Bowers, Colin Wilson (Lemon Monroe, senior); Cole Smith (Tippecanoe, senior)

The Buckeye State's best wrestler this season is the junior Marinelli, ranked first nationally in this weight class, and will enter the state tournament favored to win his third state title in as many seasons. For the season, Marinelli is undefeated (obviously) with titles at the Ironman, GMVWA, Wadsworth, and New Lexington. His primary rival is the senior Schram, twice third at state, an opponent Marinelli has beaten twice this season (5-3 in the Ironman quarterfinal and 9-4 in the GMVWA final). The possibility of Schram bumping to 170 should be noted, though the favorite there (Junior freestyle All-American Whisler) is no slouch, owning a freestyle win over Schram this past spring. On the season, Schram was fourth at Ironman and runner-up at the GMVWA in this weight; with titles at Bellbrook and Eaton up one weight class.

Three other wrestlers join Marinelli and Schram at Chillicothe Southeastern among the top 17. The sophomore Williams placed fourth at Medina and third at New Lexington; the senior Collins, last year a state alternate in this weight class, was champion at Miami Trace; while the junior Davis was eighth at the GMVWA and first at Dublin Scioto (beating returning DI state qualifier Hammond), before failing to place at Oregon Clay.

The other deep district in this weight class is the one at Alliance featuring five ranked wrestlers, including a pair of seniors that made the state tournament last year in this weight class. Rupert was runner-up at the Top Gun and champion at the Hephner, but has an in-season 8-6 dual meet loss to Hartshorn, whom is ranked right above him; Hughes spent most of his season up at 170 pounds where he placed at North Canton, GMVWA, and Top Gun before dropping to this weight class at the EOWL when he finished second. The junior Audi beat Hughes 11-5 to win the EOWL title, but prior to that failed to place at the Top Gun and was eighth at the Hephner. Fellow junior Fasnacht was a state alternate last year, and on the season placed eighth at Brecksville and fifth at the CIT. The fifth ranked wrestler is the sophomore Schenk, who was runner-up at Perry and CVC in this weight (also the North Coast Classic up at 170, along with a seventh at Oregon Clay and third at Wadsworth.

The district at Heath features four ranked wrestlers, including three state qualifiers. The senior Hartshorn seeks a third state appearance, and on the season was champion at North Canton and third at the Top Gun; the junior Fout was seventh at Brecksville; while fellow junior Livingston was fifth at North Canton, sixth at the OVAC, and runner-up at Wellsville. The senior Brooks is the other ranked wrestler, placing fourth at North Canton and sixth at the Top Gun.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Mansfield, which features just one returning state qualifier and three ranked wrestlers. The junior Jackson made state last year down at 145, but went 0-2; this season he was champion at Perrysburg (down at 152) and the TRAC, while taking third at the CIT and sixth at Brecksville. Also ranked here is the senior Baker, who was fifth at Brecksville with a 1-0 win over Jackson in the medal match.

170 pounds

1. David-Brian Whisler, Warren Howland, senior (Alliance)
2. Russell Miller, Miami Trace, senior (C. Southeastern)
3. Garrett Jordan, St. Paris Graham, junior (C. Southeastern)
4. Brendan Scherer, River View, senior (Heath)
5. Brendon Winning, Ravenna, senior (Alliance)
6. Heath Newman, Wapakoneta, senior (Mansfield)
7. Austin Robbins, Tippecanoe, senior (Mansfield)
8. Troy Stalder, Athens, senior (C. Southeastern)
9. Kyle Myers, Canal Fulton Northwest, junior (Alliance)
10. Tye Smith, Washington C.H., senior (C. Southeastern)
11. Anthony Arroyo, Maumee, senior (Mansfield)
12. Dalton Jones, Hamilton Ross, senior (C. Southeastern)
13. Colin Kaucher, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
14. Kian Thompson, Oak Harbor, sophomore (Mansfield)
15. Stone Day, Valley View, freshman (C. Southeastern)
16. Chris Cook, Coventry, junior (Alliance)
17. Jaret Lester, Akron SVSM, sophomore (Alliance)

ALL – Whisler, Winning, Myers, Cook; Lester
CHSE – Miller, Jordan, Stalder, Smith; Jones, Day
HEA – Scherer, Anthony Moran (Licking Valley, junior), Jimmy Galbraith (Carrollton, junior), Austin Deffenbaugh (Steubenville, sophomore); Ben Kidwell (Buckeye Valley, junior)
MAN – Newman, Robbins, Arroyo, Kaucher; Thompson

Whisler was my pick to win state last year down at 152 pounds, where he made a late drop to get away from Marinelli. However, he finished a disappointing seventh losing 9-8 in the quarterfinal and 6-4 in the consolation quarterfinal. During the off-season he bounced back; placing third at the NHSCA Junior Nationals in the 160 pound weight class, going undefeated at the Disney Duals, and earning All-American honors in Junior freestyle at 170. This season, he was fourth at Ironman (losing to a pair of top ten wrestlers in the country); with titles at Lorain, Wadsworth, and the EOWL.

The two wrestlers directly behind Whisler in the rankings exit the deepest district in this weight class, which would only be exacerbated if Schram bumped here. Four other ranked wrestlers join those two at Chillicothe Southeastern. The senior Miller is the highest returning state placer, finishing fourth in this weight last year; this season he is undefeated with titles at Brecksville, Beavercreek, and Miami Trace. The sophomore Jordan is ranked third – placing sixth at the Ironman, third at the GMVWA and Wadsworth (losing 8-5 to Whisler in the semifinal), and winning at New Lexington.

The seniors Stalder and Smith are also returning state qualifiers: Stalder finishing fifth at the GMVWA, third at Beavercreek, and runner-up at New Lexington; while Smith does not have a documented result yet this season. The senior Jones could end up trying his luck at 182, though that's pretty deep as well at the district level, and the freshman Day is a wrestler to keep in mind for future seasons.

The district tournament that Whisler anchors at Alliance is one of two district to have five ranked wrestlers. Returning state placer Winning was runner-up at Kenston, Top Gun, and the Hephner this season, along with a 5-2 dual meet loss to Whisler. The junior Myers was a state alternate last year in this weight class; this season he was a semifinalist at North Canton, fourth at Top Gun and Delaware Hayes, but missed out on placement at the Top Gun. Fellow underclassmen Cook and Lester seek the last state spot.

Though having just one state qualifier, the Mansfield district also has five ranked wrestlers. That lone returning qualifier is the senior Robbins, who was fourth at the GMVWA, runner-up at Troy, champion at Lima Senior and Western Brown, and third at Eaton. Two wrestlers in this district weight class were state alternates last year as juniors: Newman was runner-up at the GMVWA and sixth at Top Gun, while Arroyo was champion at Oregon Clay and second at the NLL. Fellow senior Kaucher was the state defensive player of the year for state champions Toledo Central Catholic (though if you watched the state final, one wouldn't think either team knew what defense was); during this wrestling season he was seventh at Brecksville before winning titles at the CIT and TRAC. The sophomore Thompson placed at both Medina and Perrysburg, with the tournament at Perrysburg including a 5-1 head-on win over Kaucher.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Heath, which is to be kind weak in this weight class. The lone wrestler is the senior Scherer, who was undefeated last year prior to placing seventh at state. It's likely he'll again be undefeated headed to the state tournament; given the local "talent", it's small wonder.

182 pounds

1. Jack Harris, Urbana, junior (C. Southeastern)
2. Drew Kasper, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
3. Zeck Lehman, Revere, senior (Alliance)
4. Lucas Beauch, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
5. Tre Campbell, Wauseon, junior (Mansfield)
6. Connor Rogers, Springfield Northwestern, senior (Mansfield)
7. Landon Hall, Wapakoneta, sophomore (Mansfield)
8. Brandon Jones, Steubenville, senior (Heath)
9. Jordan Radich, Warren Howland, senior (Alliance)
10. Jesse Slocum, Salem, senior (Alliance)
11. Hayden Bronne, St. Paris Graham, senior (C. Southeastern)
12. John Szep, Lake Catholic, junior (Alliance)
13. Luke Matthews, Springfield Shawnee, senior (C. Southeastern)
14. Garrett Davis, Marietta, senior (C. Southeastern)
15. Mason McCane, Washington C.H., junior (C. Southeastern)
16. Ricky Kollman, Crestwood, senior (Alliance)

ALL – Lehman, Radich, Slocum, Szep; Kollman

CHSE – Harris, Bronne, Matthews, Davis; McCane

HEA – Jones, Jud Ramage (Meadowbrook, freshman), Mitchell Wells (Richmond Edison, senior), Tristan Jones (Buckeye Local, junior); TBD

MAN – Kasper, Beauch, Campbell, Rogers; Hall

Though there is no St. Paris Graham wrestler in the title conversation at this weight class – I mean we're at 182, and it's the first time in Division II that can be said, truly amazing – the favorite is from next door neighbor Urbana. The junior Harris was a state runner-up last year after losing in the semifinals as a freshman. He has titles at the GMVWA, Troy, and Valley View this season, while his only losses were to a pair of nationally ranked kids at the Walsh Ironman (quarterfinal and consolation-12). Last year Harris became the first state finalist ever from his school, and now seeks to become their first state champion.

The Chillicothe Southeastern district that he anchors has four other ranked wrestlers to battle for the three remaining state qualification spots. The senior Bronne is a returning state qualifier but went 0-2 at the Walsh Ironman; and since then was sixth at the GMVWA, runner-up at Valley View and Wadsworth, before winning the title at New Lexington. Fellow seniors Davis and Matthews were district placers last year; state alternate Davis was champion at Gallia and ECOL, while district sixth Matthews has titles at Big Walnut, Miami Trace, and Eaton to his credit. The junior McCane was champion at Franklin (beating Jones, who is now down at 170, 6-5 in the final) and Nelsonville York.

Also with five ranked wrestlers is the district at Mansfield, though it should be noted that this one is loaded, all five ranked within the top seven here. Campbell is a returning state fourth, Kasper and Beauch each won a state match last year, Hall went 0-2 at the Schott, while Rogers was a state alternate down three weight classes. This season Kasper has titles at the Gorman and OCC to his credit; Beauch was third at Brecksville, champion at Perrysburg, and runner-up at the CIT; Campbell was fifth at Brecksville, runner-up to Beauch at Perrysburg, and runner-up at Oregon Clay; Rogers was runner-up at North Canton and fourth at Western Brown; while Hall was fourth at GMVWA and runner-up at Top Gun.

Also with five ranked wrestlers is the district at Alliance, led by returning state third Lehman, who was 3-2 at the Ironman (losses to a pair of nationally ranked wrestlers) before placing sixth at the Bill Dies. The other wrestler with state tournament experience is fellow senior Radich, a state alternate last year after making state in 2013; this season he was runner-up at Lorain and third at Hudson, before winning titles at Wadsworth and EOWL. Fellow senior Slocum is also a returning state alternate, and was runner-up at the EOWL, falling to Radich by a 3-1 score. Solon Comet Classic finalists Szep and Kollman are likely to battle for the last state tournament spot, Szep won that match 4-3 in December; since then Szep was seventh at Brecksville and fifth at the CIT, while Kolman was a semifinalist at Kenston and seventh at the Bill Dies.

Again the dreadful district in this weight class is the one at Heath, which is bereft of even a district placer in this weight class. The lone ranked wrestler is the senior Jones, who was third at North Canton before winning titles at the OVAC and Wellsville.

195 pounds

1. Kyle Kremiller, Perry, senior (Alliance)
2. Bailey Faust, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
3. Jordan Leasure, Amanda Clearcreek, junior (Heath)
4. Michael Gregory, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
5. Tyler Rowland, Streetsboro, senior (Alliance)
6. Joe Fornaro, West Geauga, junior (Alliance)
7. Jeremiah Jones, Miami Trace, senior (C. Southeastern)
8. John Mercer, Cambridge, senior (Heath)
9. Kanan Sarver, St. Paris Graham, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
10. Nick Jackson, Norwood, senior (C. Southeastern)
11. Steven Major, Indian Lake, junior (C. Southeastern)
12. Dylan Whyde, Norton, junior (Alliance)
13. Wyatt Hilliard, Franklin, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
14. Jarrod Elrod, Ashtabula Edgewood, senior (Alliance)
15. Josh Barber, Beaver Local, senior (Heath)
16. Ian Blackwood, Napoleon, senior (Mansfield)

ALL – Kremiller, Rowland, Fornaro, Whyde; Elrod

CHSE – Jones, Sarver, Jackson, Major; Hilliard

HEA – Leasure, Mercer, Barber, Zach Baker (Sparta Highland, sophomore); John Dunlap (Carrollton, senior)

MAN – Faust, Gregory, Blackwood, Cahle Puhl (Maumee, senior); Shane Dodd (Tipppecanoe, senior)

To put things simply, this is a two person weight class. Whenever the two wrestlers meet, be it the semifinal or final (since the wrestlers placed fourth and fifth last year there is no “protection”), that is your de facto state final. Last year in the consolation semifinal, Kremiller beat Faust by an 8-2 score. Though Faust has more national wrestling productivity, Flo Nationals runner-up and Disney Duals gold medalist, the pick from this corner is still Kremiller.

The Rutgers bound Kremiller has two losses this season, those coming in the semifinal at Oregon Clay (5-4 to Division III contender Dieringer) and final at Wadsworth (6-4 to Stencil). He has titles at the North Coast Classic (7-1 over Naples for his best win of the season), Perry, and the CVC this season. The district in which he exits at Alliance has four other ranked wrestlers to battle for three state spots. The senior

Rowland was a state alternate last year in this weight, and spent much of the season up at 220 before making the late drop; while up a weight, he was champion at Hudson and Kenston before finishing second at the Bill Dies. The sophomore Fornaro was runner-up at Kenston and CVC, along with a fifth place finish at Top Gun; fellow junior Whyde was first at Smithville and Hudson before injury defaulting after a quarterfinal loss at the Bill Dies; while the senior Elrod was third at Perry (13-4 loss to Kremiller) and champion at the EOWL.

The West Virginia bound Faust placed fourth at the Ironman, losing 3-2 to eventual champion Reynolds from PA in the semifinal and in overtime to 2013 state runner-up Margheim in the consolation final. He was champion at the Gorman, and his other contested match loss came by 11-0 major decision to Stencel in the semifinal at Oregon Clay. Just two other ranked wrestlers exit a Mansfield district that is shallow in this weight class. The more notable of the pair is the senior Gregory – who has titles at the CIT and Perrysburg in this weight class, titles at Solon and TRAC up at 220, and was sixth at Brecksville in this weight class.

The other deep district is the one at Chillicothe Southeastern, which features five ranked wrestlers, including a pair of that went two-and-out in last year's state tournament: the senior Jones and the sophomore Hilliard. Jones was runner-up at Brecksville and Miami Trace, with a tournament title at Beavercreek; while Hilliard was runner-up at Olentangy Liberty and Western Brown, along with failing to place at the GMVWA. The sophomore Sarver went 4-2 at the GMVWA, was third at Wadsworth, and champion at New Lexington; the senior Jackson was third at SWOWCA; while the junior Major was fifth at the GMVWA, champion at Dublin Scioto, and fourth at Oregon Clay.

Yet again the Heath district is in the caboose, with just three ranked wrestlers, only the junior Leasure a returning state qualifier. Also ranked here is the senior Mercer, who was third at the Gorman and runner-up at the OVAC, along with titles at Miami Trace (pinning Jones) and Groveport Madison; as well the sophomore Baker, a returning district placer, who was champion at Heath and runner-up at New Lexington.

220 pounds

1. Tyler Dodd, Carrollton, senior (Heath)
2. Kordell Chaney, Perkins, junior (Mansfield)
3. Drek Brumley, Akron SVSM, senior (Alliance)
4. Josh Couchman, St. Paris Graham, senior (C. Southeastern)
5. Jacob Esarco, Canfield, junior (Alliance)
6. Garit Witt, Clyde, junior (Mansfield)
7. Michael Crockett, Franklin, senior (C. Southeastern)
8. Reece Human, Carlisle, sophomore (C. Southeastern)
9. Cole Genders, Amanda Clearcreek, senior (Heath)
10. Nate Gray, Claymont, senior (Heath)
11. Dustin Baker, Sparta Highland, senior (Heath)
12. Daylen Neece, Meigs, senior (C. Southeastern)
13. Ben Higgins, Marlinton, junior (Alliance)
14. Jalen Gowdy, Sandusky, junior (Mansfield)
15. Trey Ellis, Poland, junior (Alliance)
16. Kyle Lhamon, Lima Bath, junior (Mansfield)

ALL – Brumley, Esarco, Higgins, Ellis; Josh Mason (Padua, senior)
CHSE – Couchman, Crockett, Human, Neece; Danny Foley (Batavia, senior)
HEA – Dodd, Genders, Gray, Baker; Cody Howard (Bloom Carroll, junior)
MAN – Chaney, Witt, Gowdy, Lhamon; Matt Beinard (Bay, senior)

Though this weight class features three returning state placers, it is the returning state qualifier Dodd projected to win state in this weight. Should he do so, it would be the maiden state champion for Carrollton; which currently is tied for the most state placers without a state champion (24, also Madison) and second in most runners-up without a champion (6, Madison with 8). This season, Dodd is without a documented loss, having won titles at North Canton and the Top Gun.

The three returning state placers exit each of the other district tournaments; Couchman (6th/195) is at Chillicothe Southeastern, Chaney (7th/220) is at Mansfield, while Brumley (8th/220) is at Alliance. Each district tournament has four ranked wrestlers.

The Heath district, anchored by Dodd, features two other state qualifiers and a returning state alternate. Seniors Gray and Genders both made state last year. Gray was seventh at Medina, failed to place at the Top Gun, and was an ECOL champion; while Genders was runner-up at Central Crossing. Fellow senior Baker returns as a state alternate from this weight class last year, and was runner-up at New Lexington (8-4 loss to Couchman) after failing to place at Medina.

The highest returning placer is Couchman, who missed the month of December recovering from a football injury. In his season debut at Blair, he lost to a bumped up 195 pound wrestler, National Prep placer Putnam. Since then, it's been positive – losing just by one to returning state placer Knapp, while winning titles at Wadsworth and New Lexington. Also ranked in the Chillicothe Southeastern district in this weight class are returning state qualifiers Crockett, Human, and Neece. The senior Crockett has runner-up finishes in four tournaments this year, three of those coming to the nationally ranked Austin Myers from Kentucky; the sophomore Human was sixth at the GMVWA (losing in OT to Crockett) and runner-up at Eaton; while the senior Neece was champion at Vinton County and Gallia.

Two-time state placer Chaney leads the way at Mansfield, and on this season placed eighth at the Ironman before finishing runner-up at Medina (beating Brumley 2-1 in the semifinal) and the Gorman. He is the lone returning state qualifier in this district. Also ranked here is the junior Witt, who was champion at Brecksville; fellow junior Gowdy, champion at Tiffin Columbian and seventh at Oregon Clay, before an upset 7-1 victory over Chaney in late January; and another junior Lhamon, who was eighth at GMVWA and fifth at Oregon Clay.

Two-time state placer Brumley is the anchor at Alliance, where he is also the lone wrestler with previous state experience. On the season, he was fourth at Medina, third at Top Gun, and champion at the Hephner. The junior Esarco is a returning state alternate from this weight class, and on the season was third at the Bill Dies, champion at the EOWL, and has a 7-3 dual meet victory over Gray. Two other juniors round out the ranked lot: Higgins was fifth at Top Gun and second at the Hephner; Ellis was runner-up at Kenston, sixth at Top Gun, fifth at the EOWL, and seventh at the Hephner.

285 pounds

1. Troy Caldwell, Jonathan Alder, senior (Heath)
2. Evan Loughman, Sheridan, senior (C. Southeastern)
3. Deaken McCoy, Galion, senior (Mansfield)

4. Brandon Pahl, Vincent Warren, senior (C. Southeastern)
5. J'Quan Fisher, Toledo Central Catholic, senior (Mansfield)
6. Nate Temple, Lexington, senior (Mansfield)
7. Brandon Truhn, Perry, senior (Alliance)
8. Mitch Bischoff, Norton, junior (Alliance)
9. Mike Bell, Warren Howland, senior (Alliance)
10. Ian Sharp, West Branch, sophomore (Alliance)
11. Jacqui Vanmeter, Licking Valley, junior (Heath)
12. Colin Mange, Clyde, senior (Mansfield)
13. Logan Ferrell, Tippecanoe, junior (Mansfield)
14. John Seibert, Defiance, senior (Mansfield)
15. Micah Campbell, Carrollton, senior (Heath)
16. Jamez Young, Sandusky, sophomore (Mansfield)

ALL – Truhn, Bischoff, Bell, Sharp; Shawn Barnes (Alliance, junior)

CHSE – Loughman, Pahl, Ryan Fessler (Bishop Fenwick, senior), Andrew Smith (Franklin, senior); TBD

HEA – Caldwell, Vanmeter, Campbell, Jacob Packwood (Bloom Carroll, senior); Richard Cox (Tusky Valley, senior)

MAN – McCoy, Fisher, Temple, Mange; Ferrell, Seibert, Young

With five returning state placers, and eight having state experience, this is pretty veteran by heavyweight standards. Leading the way is last year's 220 pound champion Caldwell. He entered last year's state tournament unheralded, despite being a district champion, and is still a relative unknown. This season he has titles at Nelsonville York, Marion County (beating McCoy), and Marion Pleasant to his credit.

Two other ranked wrestlers join Caldwell in the Heath district, those being returning state qualifier Vanmeter and returning state alternate Campbell. The junior Vanmeter placed fifth at Brecksville this season, while the senior Campbell was fifth at the Top Gun.

The deepest district here is the one at Mansfield that features four returning state qualifiers, including a pair of state placers, and seven ranked wrestlers in all. Fisher and Temple were district finalists last year in this weight class, Fisher winning that title, while they placed sixth and seventh respectively at the Schott. This season, Fisher was fourth at Brecksville and Perrysburg, runner-up at the CIT, and champion at the TRC; while Fisher was seventh at the Ironman, runner-up at the Gorman (losing 4-3 TB to McCoy), and sixth at Oregon Clay.

The favorite at Mansfield is two-time state qualifier McCoy, a FloNationals placer and Disney Duals gold medalist; who on the season was champion at four tournaments (including wins over Cary and Temple at the Gorman), and runner-up to Caldwell at Marion County. Fellow senior Mange is also a returning state qualifier, though he failed to place at Brecksville. Among the other ranked wrestlers are district placer Ferrell, who was fifth at the GMVWA with titles at Lima Senior and Western Brown; state alternate Seibert, who failed to place at the GMVWA, was third at Perrysburg, and eighth at Oregon Clay.

The other two returning state placers are Loughman and Pahl, the only two ranked wrestlers at the Chillicothe Southeastern district in this weight class. Loughman won this district title last year, while Pahl was fourth, but when the two met at state in the consolation semifinal, it was Pahl winning a 10-4

decision. This season, Pahl was champion at Gallia and Miami Trace (injury default over Loughman); while Lough was third at Medina and runner-up at the Bill Dies (those losses coming to the top two ranked wrestlers in Division I).

Rounding out the districts is the one at Alliance with four ranked wrestlers, though none have state tournament experience. Leading the way is the senior Truhn, a district placer last year at 220 pounds; this season he was fourth at the North Coast and Oregon Clay, champion at Perry and Wadsworth, and runner-up at the CVC. The junior Bishcoff was champion at Smithville, third at Hudson, and fourth at the Bill Dies; the senior Bell was champion at Lorain and the EOWL, and fourth at Hudson; while the junior Barnes placed third at Top Gun and was runner-up (6-5 to Bell) at the EOWL.

Team Board

1. St. Paris Graham
2. Toledo Central Catholic
3. Lexington
4. Akron SVSM
5. Bellbrook
6. Canfield
7. Claymont
8. Wauseon
9. Oak Harbor
10. Padua

Division III

106 pounds

1. Drew Mattin, Delta, sophomore (Fostoria)
2. Caleb Brooks, Bishop Ready, freshman (Coshocton)
3. Alex Rhine, Mechanicsburg, sophomore (Troy)
4. Shane Johnston, Tuslaw, senior (Garfield Hts)
5. Ronnie Pietro, Dayton Christian, freshman (Troy)
6. Gavin Stika, Norwayne, freshman (Garfield Hts)
7. Graham Shore, Miami East, freshman (Troy)
8. Christian Wellman, Waynedale, junior (Garfield Hts)
9. Alec Bailey, Manchester, freshman (Garfield Hts)
10. Connor Ryan, Covington, junior (Troy)
11. Matt Seifert, Utica, sophomore (Coshocton)
12. Colton Bethel, Ridgewood, sophomore (Coshocton)
13. David Staten, West Jefferson, sophomore (Coshocton)
14. Evan Guilford, Ayersville, sophomore (Fostoria)
15. Nate Vasquez, Fremont SJCC, sophomore (Fostoria)
16. Jevyn Pratt, Carey, sophomore (Fostoria)

COSH – Brooks, Seifert, Bethel, Staten; Jake Neer (Northmor, sophomore)

FOS – Mattin, Guilford, Vasquez, Pratt; Cameron Gessner (Sandusky SMCC, junior)

GH – Jonston, Stika, Wellman, Bailey; Brendan Williamson (Kirtland, junior)

TROY – Rhine, Pietro, Shore, Ryan; Jacob Edwards (Troy Christian, freshman)

Last year's Division III team race between Delta and Dayton Christian was somewhat tight, though it was decided in favor of Delta during Saturday morning's consolation semifinals and medal matches.

However, that is going to be just a prelude to the potential narrow nature of this year's team race. The major moment in time when things got tight last year came on Friday night during the early portion of the state semifinals; Dayton Christian won semifinals at 106 and 113, Delta lost in both weight classes.

The Delta loss at 106 came from Mattin, who is the projected favorite to win this state tournament weight class. In last year's state semifinal, Mattin lost a 2-0 ultimate tiebreak decision to Hunter Bray. This year, Mattin is undefeated when facing wrestlers not ranked first in the country (Walsh Ironman final); with titles coming at Brecksville, Perrysburg, and Oregon Clay; as well as earning a 5-0 dual meet victory over Division I favorite Donathan.

Mattin exits a Fostoria district featuring three other ranked wrestlers, all sophomores, though they are the ones ranked 14th through 16th. Guilford was fourth in January at Lima CC; Vasquez was fifth at Perrysburg and Lima CC (January), runner-up at Van Buren, and champion (113) at Northwood; while Pratt was champion at Bellevue, Lima CC (December), and Van Buren before taking sixth in January at Lima CC.

Ranked second in this weight is the freshman Brooks, who was third at junior high state in the 102 pound weight class. This season, he was third at Medina before winning titles at the CIT and Groveport Madison. His district at Coshocton includes three other ranked wrestlers, including returning state qualifier Bethel, who was champion at Heath (pin Staten); while the sophomore Seifert has a 6-4 dual meet victory over Bethel last month.

The only returning state placer other than Mattin is the senior Johnston, who has placed sixth and fifth at state the last two years. This season, he was sixth at North Canton and Medina, but is still the anchor at a Garfield Hts district that includes three other ranked wrestlers. Freshman Stika (fifth at junior high state last year) is the next in line; followed by the junior Wellman, a returning state alternate; and another freshman Bailey, who was champion at the Gorman and eighth at the Bill Dies.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Troy, which is led by returning state qualifier Rhine, and features three other ranked wrestlers. The sophomore pinned Johnston in an early January dual meet, placed sixth at the Ironman, and won the January Lima CC tournament. Two freshmen, Pietro and Shore, are next in the rankings ladder here. Pietro was champion at Franklin, 3-2 at the Ironman, and fifth at Brecksville; while Shore has a head-on pin in overtime over Rhine, finished runner-up at Troy and Valley View, and was third at Lima CC (January). Finally, it's the junior Ryan – a returning state alternate – who was fourth at the GMVWA and runner-up to Rhine in the January Lima CC tournament.

113 pounds

1. Tommy Hoskins, Dayton Christian, freshman (Troy)
2. Kristopher Hill, Bishop Hartley, senior (Coshocton)
3. Hunter Lucas, Lima Central Catholic, junior (Troy)
4. Jake Adkins, Johnstown Northridge, senior (Coshocton)
5. Joey Bowen, Manchester, junior (Garfield Hts)
6. Greg Quinn, Shadyside, sophomore (Coshocton)
7. Brandon White, Harrison Central, junior (Coshocton)
8. Mitch Tikkanen, Jackson Milton, senior (Garfield Hts)
9. Alex Isbrandt, Miami East, freshman (Troy)
10. Brysen Mansor, Huron, senior (Fostoria)
11. Tyler Wetzel, Mechanicsburg, sophomore (Troy)
12. Kyle Denier, Blanchester, sophomore (Troy)
13. Jared Ford, Covington, freshman (Troy)
14. Dominic Rosin, Sandusky SMCC, sophomore (Fostoria)
15. Chet Swartzmiller, Hopewell Loudon, senior (Fostoria)
16. Dakota McCloskey, Girard, senior (Garfield Hts)
17. Gavin Grime, Archbold, freshman (Fostoria)

COSH – Hill, Adkins, Quinn, White; Blake Evans (Paint Valley, sophomore)

FOS – Mansor, Rosin, Swartzmiller, Grime; Kage Seals (Paulding, junior), Martin Steinberger (Defiance Tinora, senior)

GH – Bowen, Tikkanen, McCloskey, Brad Trescott (Rootstown, sophomore); Trent Mast (Cardinal, sophomore)

TROY – Hoskins, Lucas, Isbrandt, Wetzel; Denier, Ford

If Dayton Christian is going to derail Delta at the Schott, it's going to take strong performances from all their core wrestlers, including the impact freshmen. One of those impact freshmen is the favorite to win state in this weight class. Hoskins was one match away from placement at the pre-season Super 32 Challenge, and finished seventh at the Walsh Ironman (including a win over defending state champion Baughman to clinch the placement). In addition, he was champion at Franklin and has a dual meet win over returning state placer Hart.

The district that Hoskins anchors at Troy is loaded with five other ranked wrestlers. Among them is returning state placer Lucas, who was fourth at 106 in Division II at Lima Shawnee last year. After returning from transfer suspension, he was third at the CIT before winning the January Lima CC tournament. The freshman Isbrandt is next in line, finishing second at Troy, winning at Valley View, and taking third in January at Lima CC (8-4 semifinal loss to Lucas). The sophomore Wetzel follows, having placed fourth at Lima CC (January), and with dual meet wins this season over those directly behind him in this district.

Those directly behind him are returning state qualifier Denier and the freshman Ford. Denier was runner-up at Western Brown and Lima CC (January); while Ford placed fourth at junior high state, and this season was fourth at Troy and fifth at Lima CC (January).

Four of the other top seven wrestlers exit the district at Coshocton, including three returning state placers. The senior Hill is a two-time placer with runner-up finishes at the GMVWA and Groveport Madison to go with a CIT title, where he beat Lucas (3-1 semifinal) and Decesare (9-6 final). Fellow two-time placer Adkins was champion at Mt. Vernon and runner-up at Oregon Clay and New Lexington, with each of those losses coming to super frosh Mattox and Moore. The third state placer is the sophomore Quinn, who was third at the OVAC (5-2 over White in the consolation final) though he failed to place at Brecksville. Also here is returning state qualifier White, the junior finished fourth at the OVAC.

The other two top eight wrestlers exit the Garfield Hts district, though there are just three ranked wrestlers in all from that site. Two-time state seventh Bowen placed fourth at Brecksville, first at the Gorman, and runner-up at the Bill Dies. Returning state qualifier Tikkanen placed seventh at Solon, was champion at Hudson, along with runner-up finishes at the Hephner and EOWL. Also ranked here is the senior McCloskey, a returning state qualifier who was fifth at the Hephner and EOWL.

Lastly among the districts is the one at Heath that features just three ranked wrestlers, all between 10th and 16th. Most notable from that list is returning state qualifier Rosin, who still needs a scratch make at 113, while he does have titles at Bellevue and Toledo St. John's at 120.

120 pounds

1. Jake Spiess, Delta, junior (Fostoria)
2. Michael May, Dayton Christian, senior (Troy)
3. Tanner Smith, Mechanicsburg, sophomore (Troy)
4. Alex Smith, Sandusky SMCC, senior (Fostoria)
5. Damian Short, Archbold, senior (Fostoria)
6. Michael Sergent, Troy Christian, sophomore (Troy)
7. Stan Bleich, Elyria Catholic, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
8. Rodney Richter, Monroe Central, senior (Coshocton)
9. Louis DeMarco, Hawken, senior (Garfield Hts)
10. Damian D'Emilio, Genoa, junior (Fostoria)
11. George Clemens, Wayne Trace, junior (Troy)
12. Tony Paolucci, Rootstown, junior (Garfield Hts)
13. Riley Smucker, Smithville, freshman (Garfield Hts)
14. Mitch Skleres, Pymantuning Valley, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
15. Zane Strubler, Miami Trace, freshman (Troy)
16. Preston Smith, Marion Pleasant, sophomore (Coshocton)

COSH – Richter, Smith, Conan Becker (Northmor, freshman), Gavin Stalnaker (Belpre, junior); Quinton Bishop (West Muskingum, junior)

FOS – Spiess, Smith, Short, D’Emilio; Chase Moore (Swanton, freshman)

GH – Bleich, DeMarco, Paolucci, Smucker; Skleres

TROY – May, Smith, Sergeant, Clemens; Strubler

Spiess, a state champion at 106 in 2013, suffered an absolute shock of a loss last year in the state semifinal at 113. Leading 3-1 inside of thirty seconds left in the match, he was tossed on his back for two-and-two to lose 5-3. He would come back to finish third. While he certified this weight class in a mid-December dual meet, his major competitions have come up at 126; fourth at Brecksville (losses to Assad and Bray), runner-up at Perrysburg (loss to Mario Guillen), and champion at Oregon Clay.

Though favored, he will not be without challengers, starting at the district level where three other top ten wrestlers are present. The senior Alex Smith has twice finished fifth at state, and has spent much of this season up at 126; where he was runner-up at Bellevue and champion at Toledo St. John’s; 2013 state qualifier Short was runner-up at Oregon Clay in this weight class, while he has been at 126 for other competitions (finishing seventh at Medina, and winning the January Lima CC title); while returning state qualifier D’Emilio was fourth at Perrysburg and first in his conference meet.

The other three top six ranked wrestlers all exit the district at Troy. Those include two-time state placer May, a Super 32 placer that signed with N.C. State; the sophomore Tanner Smith, who placed at the Ironman last year while competing for St. Paris Graham; and the sophomore Sergeant, who was fourth at state last year. May upset now two-time state champion Hancock last year in the district final, but finished sixth at state; this year he was a match away from placing at the Ironman (losses to Newhouse and Mackall) and runner-up at Brecksville. Tanner Smith returned from the half-season transfer suspension to win the January Lima CC event; while Sergeant went 0-2 at the Ironman this year, but was champion at Sidney and runner-up at the GMVWA.

Two other ranked wrestlers are in this district, so they seek that last spot. The junior Clemens is already a two-time state qualifier, but is after his first state placement; this year he was first and Lincolnview, Lima CC (December), and Van Buren, before finishing runner-up to Tanner Smith at Lima CC (January). The freshman Isbrandt, the third notable Class of 2018 wrestler for Miami East, was third at Sidney and Lima CC (January), champion at Troy, and runner-up at Valley View.

The Garfield Hts district features five ranked wrestlers, including returning state placer DeMarco and three other state qualifiers. The senior DeMarco was eighth at state last year, and was undefeated this season until losing the CVC final 9-1 to Brezovec. The sophomore Bleich won the district title over DeMarco, but went 1-2 at the state tournament; this season he was champion at Avon Lake and Hudson up at 126, and CIT champion in this weight class.

The junior Paolucci and sophomore Skleres also made state last year. Paolucci was runner-up to Brezovec at Aurora in the 126 weight class, before coming down to win the Bill Dies title in this weight class; while Skleres was fourth at Kenston and runner-up at the EOWL. The other ranked wrestler in this district is the freshman Smucker, a junior high state placer, who was third in the 126 weight class at Smithville.

Just two ranked wrestlers will exit the Coshocton district, with the senior Richter the lone returning state qualifier. This season Richter was runner-up at the OVAC; while the other ranked wrestler here is the sophomore Preston Smith, last year a district placer, and this year champion at Marion Pleasant.

126 pounds

1. Evan Cheek, Milan Edison, senior (Fostoria)
2. Garrett Hancock, Troy Christian, senior (Troy)
3. Hunter Bray, Dayton Christian, junior (Troy)
4. Aric Peters, Bethel Tate, senior (Troy)
5. Carson Mills, Fredericktown, senior (Coshocton)
6. Ethan Ice, Marion Pleasant, senior (Coshocton)
7. Jett Heldenbrand, Hillsdale, senior (Garfield Hts)
8. J.D. Reisinger, Swanton, junior (Fostoria)
9. Tanner Bey, Versailles, sophomore (Troy)
10. Ruger Goeltzenleuchter, Wayne Trace, sophomore (Troy)
11. Sawyer Caprella, Allen East, sophomore (Troy)
12. Seth Hayes, Rootstown, junior (Garfield Hts)
13. Logan Kissel, Garrettsville Garfield, freshman (Garfield Hts)
14. Ian Mast, Cardinal, senior (Garfield Hts)
15. Johnny Wheeler, Northwood, junior (Fostoria)
16. Josh Kahl, Shadyside, sophomore (Coshocton)
17. Jay Uhlenake, Coldwater, junior (Troy)

COSH – Mills, Ice, Kahl, Donnie Starkey (Toronto, junior); Dylan Little (Newcomerstown, junior)

FOS – Cheek, Reisinger, Wheeler, Conor Emch (Woodmore, sophomore); Jacob Supina (Sandusky SMCC, senior)

GH – Heldenbrand, Hayes, Kissel, Mast; Charles Davis (Fairless, senior)

TROY – Cheek, Bray, Peters, Bey; Goeltzenleuchter, Caprella, Uhlenake

Picking against two time state champions, even ones that have split current-season matches against their direct competition is a rare – but not unheard of – concept for me. The last time I went against a two-time state champion (a few years back), it fell in my face badly. However, that's not going to stop me this go around. The pick here is for Cheek (previous fourth and third) to get over two-time state champion Hancock – and others – to earn an elusive state title.

The two have split matches this season, Hancock winning the final at Marion County in mid-January, while Cheek won 7-3 two weeks later at the SMCC Duals. Last season Cheek won the regular season meeting at Marion County, but it was Hancock earning a 3-1 state quarterfinal victory on the way to his second title. Both wrestlers went 3-2 at the Ironman, with one of their losses coming to Townsell (Hancock lost 5-2, Cheek lost 4-3); while their additional loss came to a tournament placer.

Additional notable results for Cheek include a runner-up finish at Brecksville with a 3-0 semifinal victory over Bray on the count of a third period cradle, then losing 3-1 to Assad in the final; another 3-0 victory over Bray at the SMCC Duals, and then a 10-0 major decision victory over projected 120 pound state champ Spiess in the state duals semifinal. He is the clear anchor at Fostoria, where just two other ranked wrestlers will compete. One of those is returning state qualifier Reisinger, who was third at Toledo St. John's, runner-up at Northwood (132) and Van Buren, along with a fifth place finish at Lima CC (January).

With all the noise about a potential Cheek vs. Hancock showdown, one should not forget about returning state runner-up Bray, who is up three weights this year. He placed third at Brecksville, including a 4-2 consolation final win over Spiess; with subsequent dual meet victories over Division I title contender Bentley (11-10) and Spiess (3-2) in February. Remember that last year Hancock lost the district final to Dayton Christian teammate May. Additional resume points for Hancock are a title at Sidney and a runner-up finish (losing 3-1 to Seipel) at the GMVWA.

Hancock and Bray exit a Troy district with five other possible ranked wrestlers. Do note that it is likely returning state placer Peters finds a different weight class, probably 132, to compete. The senior has been in this weight much of the season though, including a third place finish at SWOWCA. The other two returning state qualifiers at this district weight class, Uhlenake and Kamron Paulus (Milton Union) are seventh and eighth on the ladder. Sophomores Bey (state alternate) and Goeltzenleuchter were go-to-state match losers last season. This season Goeltzenleuchter has tournament titles at Lincolnview, Lima CC (December), and Van Buren – including head-on wins over Uhlenake and Reisinger. The other ranked wrestler here is the sophomore Caprella, who was runner-up at Milan Edison and Lima CC (January), third at Van Buren, with titles at Allen County and the NWC.

The remaining returning state placer is the senior Mills, who anchors the happenings at Coshocton. On the season he was first at Mt. Vernon, fourth at Medina, and second (at 132) at the Gorman. He'll be joined by just two other ranked wrestlers – both state alternates – at the district tournament in Ice and Kahl. The senior Ice was champion at Marion Harding and runner-up at Marion Pleasant, while the sophomore Kahl was sixth at the OVAC.

Closing it out is the district at Garfield Hts, which features four ranked wrestlers, two of whom are returning state qualifiers. The senior Heldebrand is after a third state berth, and was third at Lima CC in January; while the senior Mast was runner-up at the CVC in this weight and fourth in the season opening Aurora tournament down at 120. An addition state qualifier, Davis, is not listed in the top 16. Remaining ranked wrestlers are the junior Hayes, who was fourth at the Bill Dies and champion (at 132) at Aurora; along with the freshman Kissel, a junior high state placer, who was eighth at the Bill Dies.

132 pounds

1. Jarred Ganger, Covington, senior (Troy)
2. Tyler Sarreshteh, Liberty Benton, senior (Fostoria)
3. Brednan Fitzgerald, Grandview Hts, junior (Coshocton)
4. Colt Yinger, Nelsonville York, freshman (Coshocton)
5. Brady Barnett, Milan Edison, sophomore (Fostoria)
6. Josh Clary, Dayton Christian, junior (Troy)
7. Tim Mecklenburg, Lutheran West, senior (Garfield Hts)
8. Joe Tromba, VASJ, junior (Garfield Hts)
9. John Smith, Mapleton, junior (Garfield Hts)
10. Jake Gutierrez, Springfield Catholic Central, junior (Troy)
11. Nick Miller, Mechanicsburg, junior (Troy)
12. Gabe Santa-rita, Edgerton, senior (Fostoria)
13. Spencer Seibert, Coldwater, junior (Troy)
14. Buddy Limes, Otsego, senior (Fostoria)
15. Collin Hennon, Lima Central Catholic, junior (Troy)
16. Eric Owens, Liberty Union, senior (Coschocton)

COSH – Fitzgerald, Yinger, Owens, Steele Strout (Johnstown Northridge, sophomore); James Eppich (Centerburg, junior)

FOS – Sarreshteh, Barnett, Santa-rita, Limes; Trevor Reed (New London, junior)

GH – Mecklenburg, Tromba, Smith, Cody Rhoads (Grand Valley, sophomore); Garrett Hall (Chippewa, junior)

TROY – Ganger, Clary, Gutierrez, Miller; Seibert, Hennon

Though there will be no four-time state champion crowned this year, there are a pair of wrestlers after a fourth state finals appearance. The first being Cameron Kelly in Division II at this weight class, while the other is two-time state champion Ganger in this weight class. The Kent State bound grappler placed fifth at the Ironman and was runner-up at the GMVWA before winning titles at Troy and Lima CC (January).

While none of the other five ranked wrestlers at the Troy district can truly compete with Ganger, they will only have three state spots to battle for (and Peters could come in from 126 to muck things up further). Three of them – Clary, Miller, and Seibert – bring state experience from last season, though each went two-and-out as sophomores. Clary was third at Franklin and seventh at Brecksville, Miller was third at Lima CC (January), while Seibert was runner-up at Troy and fourth at Lima CC (January).

Fellow junior Gutierrez was a state alternate last season, placing third at the CIT this season, and possessing a head-on dual meet victory over Miller. The last ranked wrestler here is the junior Hennon, who was fifth at Lima CC (January), including a head-on win over returning state qualifier Reed. An addition wrestler to watch here, though not ranked, is returning state alternate McKinley Screetch (Dayton CJ).

The other semi-deep district in this weight class is the one at Fostoria, which features four ranked wrestlers, two of whom are state qualifiers. Leading the way is two-time state placer Sarreshteh, who has tournament crowns at Northwood and Van Buren, runner-up finishes at Medina (11-2 loss to Ladnier) and Lima CC – January (7-3 loss to Ganger), and a third at Perrysburg. The sophomore Barnett placed at state down three weights last year, and this season has a title at Milan Edison to go with 2-2 finishes at Ironman and Brecksville, as well as dual meet wins over Miller and Clary.

Also ranked at Fostoria is returning state alternate Santa-rita and the senior Limes. This season Limes was sixth at Perrysburg, runner-up at Van Buren, and champion at the NBC and (at 138) Northwood. Not ranked in the weight class, and holding the fifth position in this district is returning state qualifier Reed. It should be noted that the sophomore Mattin, a returning state qualifier has been pulled from the rankings due to injury that caused him to miss multiple competitions before and after his fifth place finish at Perrysburg; should he be able to return, tab him as a low state placement candidate.

Two of the top four ranked wrestlers, the junior Fitzgerald and the freshman Yinger, are among the three ranked wrestlers to exit the Coshocton district. Two-time state qualifier Fitzgerald was fourth at Medina and first at Marion Pleasant; while Yinger was champion at Olentangy Liberty and Nelsonville York (14-4 over returning DII placer Tawney), runner-up at New Lexington, and eighth at Brecksville. Also ranked here is returning district placer Owens.

To wrap it up is the Garfield Hts district with just three ranked wrestlers, led by returning state placer Mecklenburg, who was runner-up at Perry. Also ranked here are a pair of juniors, returning state alternate Tromba and 2013 state qualifier Smith. Tromba was fifth at the North Coast, fourth at Perry, and runner-up at CIT (4-3 over Gutierrez in the semifinal) and Groveport Madison; while Smith, who

failed to make weight in last year's sectional tournament, has a runner-up finish at Marion Harding and a Firelands Conference title (beating Reed) to his credit this season.

138 pounds

1. David Carr, Dayton Christian, freshman (Troy)
2. Ryan Ford, Covington, junior (Troy)
3. Dustin Marteney, Delta, junior (Fostoria)
4. Cody Ohnmeiss, Troy Christian, senior (Troy)
5. Colton Ullman, Loudonville, senior (Garfield Hts)
6. Devon Dunbar, Genoa, senior (Fostoria)
7. Trent Soto, Otsego, senior (Fostoria)
8. Wes Fritz, Norwalk St. Paul, senior (Fostoria)
9. Hunter Pizzino, Harrison Central, senior (Coshocton)
10. Jason Sadler, Rootstown, junior (Garfield Hts)
11. Bobby Stewart, Union Local, junior (Coshocton)
12. Evan Francis, Kirtland, senior (Garfield Hts)
13. Jake Farley, Northmor, junior (Coshocton)
14. Chase Mayhabb, Milton Union, junior (Troy)
15. Kolby Rayner, Caldwell, junior (Coshocton)
16. Alex Neuberger, Milan Edison, sophomore (Fostoria)

COSH – Pizzino, Stewart, Farley, Rayner; Austin Parmer (Utica, senior)

FOS – Marteney, Dunbar, Soto, Fritz; Neuberger

GH – Ullman, Sadler, Francis, Kyle Waddell (Tuslaw, senior); Logan Stanley (Waynedale, freshman)

TROY – Carr, Ford, Ohnmeiss, Mayhabb; Justin Hixson (Bethel Tate, junior)

I recall a time more than ten years ago when Southwest DIII was mostly a “punching bag” at the state tournament. My goodness things have changed. They're the ones punching tickets to state titles these days. That pattern continues in this weight class, where the top two wrestlers and three of the top four all exit the Troy district. The joint favorites are a pair of Walsh Ironman placers in the freshman Carr and the junior Ford.

Carr won a high school state title while competing for Woodford County, Ky. last year with an upset victory over 2013 Ironman placer Trae Blackwell (now at Oklahoma) in the final. This season, he was fifth at the Ironman, with titles at Franklin and Brecksville (beating Marteney 8-1 in the semi and Division I state champion Screptock 4-3 TB in the final). Ford placed third at state last year, and this season finished sixth at the Ironman and second at the GMVWA before winning titles at Troy and Lima CC (January). The third top four ranked wrestler at Troy is the senior Ohnmeiss, a returning state qualifier - fourth at the GMVWA, third at Sidney (at 145), and with a 6-4 dual meet victory over Dunbar. Rounding out the ranked group at this site is the junior Mayhabb, a 2013 state qualifier – eighth at GMVWA, fourth at Troy, and runner-up at Eaton.

Four members of the top eight will exit the Fostoria district, led by the junior Marteney, who is already a two-time state placer. This season he went 3-2 at the Walsh Ironman, finished fourth at Brecksville, was champion at Perrysburg, and runner-up at Oregon Clay. Returning state third Dunbar missed the first half on a transfer suspension, but since return was runner-up at Perrysburg and first at NBC (5-4 over Soto). Returning state sixth Soto was third at Perrysburg, champion at Van Buren, and runner-up at NBC;

while two-time state placer Fritz was third at the Gorman and second at Lima CC (January) after failing to place at Brecksville.

The other projected state placer is Ullman, seventh last year as a junior down two weight classes. This year he was champion at the Gorman and fourth at the Top Gun. He is joined by just two other ranked wrestlers in the Garfield Hts district, returning state qualifiers Sadler and Francis. The junior Sadler was fourth at the Bill Dies after finishing runner-up at Aurora up a weight class, while the senior Francis seeks a third state appearance. Returning state alternate Waddell is not ranked in the top 16, but does hold the fourth state qualification spot here.

Lastly it's a Coshocton district that also features four ranked wrestlers, led by the senior Pizzino, a returning state qualifier who was runner-up at the OVAC. Behind him on the ladder are three juniors: third at the OVAC Stewart (losing 3-2 TB to Pizzino, beating Rayner 5-1); returning state alternate Farley, runner-up at Big Walnut and champion at Marion Harding and Marion Pleasant; along with returning state qualifier Rayner, who was sixth at the OVAC and champion at Gallia.

145 pounds

1. Logan Lacure/Nick Vestal, Dayton Christian, junior (Troy)
2. Derek Gross, Norwalk St. Paul, sophomore (Fostoria)
3. Reid Stanley, Waynedale, junior (Garfield Hts)
4. Joe Ziegler, Mechanicsburg, senior (Troy)
5. Trevor Anderson, West Liberty Salem, junior (Troy)
6. Chance Marthey, Tuslaw, senior (Garfield Hts)
7. Mitchell Davidson, Eastwood, junior (Fostoria)
8. Mitchell Matheny, Riverdale, senior (Fostoria)
9. Jacob Spino, Independence, senior (Garfield Hts)
10. Austin Glosser, Otsego, senior (Fostoria)
11. Brandon Bates, Genoa, senior (Fostoria)
12. Josh Weber, Loudonville, senior (Garfield Hts)
13. Bobby Kelley, Sherwood Fairview, senior (Fostoria)
14. Sam Neer, Northmor, senior (Coshocton)
15. Seth Bell, Troy Christian, senior (Troy)
16. Manney Tullius, Belpre, senior (Coshocton)

COSH – Neer, Tullius, Logan Thompson (St. Clairsville, junior), Lane Waddell (Cardington-Lincoln, senior); Brandon Cornell (Chesire River Valley, sophomore)

FOS – Gross, Davidson, Matheny, Glosser; Bates, Kelley

GH – Stanley, Marthey, Spino, Weber; Josh Tompkins (Mogadore, junior)

TROY – Lacure, Ziegler, Anderson, Bell; Tyler Goodpaster (Deer Park, senior)

Last year as a sophomore, Lacure became Greeneview's first ever state champion; winning state at 145 pounds after finishing runner-up down four weight classes at 120 the year prior. Since returning from his half-season transfer suspension, Lacure has been yet another dominant wrestler in the Dayton Christian lineup. He is the extreme favorite to repeat as state champion.

Recent developments leading to him being unavailable for the state dual meet finals caused the Warriors to also certify fellow junior Vestal in this weight class. This young man placed seventh at state in this weight class last year after finishing as runner-up as a freshman in Florida competing for Lake

Highland Prep. In his debut appearance at 145, he beat returning state placer Ziegler by 2-1 decision. If Lacure can't compete, it's only logical that Vestal comes down here, given the presence of Romero in the weight above. Either way, this report will predict the Dayton Christian starter to win state at 145.

The district tournament at Troy will feature three other ranked wrestlers: returning state placer Ziegler, 2013 state alternate Anderson, and returning state alternate Bell. Ziegler was champion in January at Lima CC, though to give context he went 0-2 at the Walsh Ironman in mid-December. After missing his sophomore season, the junior Anderson was champion at Toledo St. John's, fourth at Perrysburg, and runner-up at Lima CC (January) with a 9-7 early round upset over returning state placer Gross. Last year Bell competed at Dayton Christian, this year he's at Troy Christian; since his return, he has three losses to ranked wrestlers and a fourth to the non-ranked Collin Mancuso (Milan Edison).

Ranked second in this weight class is Gross, who was fourth at state last year as a freshman. This season, he was sixth at Brecksville (all three losses by two or less to returning state placers), champion at the Gorman, and third at Lima CC (January). The district tournament at Fostoria, where Gross is the top wrestler, has five other ranked wrestlers – only four total can make the state tournament. Of those, only Matheny has a state tournament appearance, though he had to take it through the alternate position; this year he was runner-up at Van Buren (losing 4-3 to Davidson) and champion at Northwood.

Another go-to-state match loser in this district weight is the junior Davidson, who was champion at van Buren, runner-up in January at Lima CC, and runner-up at NBC (6-1 loss to Bates). The senior Glosser was runner-up (at 152) at Northwood, third at Van Buren and the NBC, and fifth at Perrysburg. Round out the ranked wrestlers is Bates, seventh at Perrysburg and NBC runner-up, along with Kelley – runner-up at Toledo St. John's and (at 152) Lincolnview.

The other two returning placers in this state weight class exit the Garfield Hts district, along with a returning state qualifier, and a 2013 state placer. Leading the way is the junior Stanley, who was fourth in this state tournament weight class last year; Marthey placed seventh at state last year and has competed in three different weight classes this year (sixth at North Canton at 160, 2-2 at Medina at 152); the senior Spino won the district tournament last year before going 1-2 at state, and this year failed to place at Medina before finishing second in the CVC meet; while fellow senior Weber was runner-up at Central Crossing in this weight class after taking fifth in the Gorman up at 152.

Rounding out the districts is the one at Coshocton, which is extraordinarily weak in this weight class with just two ranked wrestlers – those 14th and 16th. Neither was even a district placer last year; Neer was runner-up at Marion Harding and Marion Pleasant, while Tullius was champion at Vinton County and eighth at Medina.

152 pounds

1. Kaleb Romero, Mechanicsburg, sophomore (Troy)
2. Nick Vestal, Dayton Christian, junior (Troy)
3. Deven Taylor, Margaretta, senior (Fostoria)
4. Zach Steiner, Norwayne, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
5. Josh Kahl, Shadyside, junior (Coshocton)
6. Cody Dingess, West Jefferson, senior (Coshocton)
7. Davey Tunon, Clinton Massie, junior (Troy)
8. Lance Miller, Covington, sophomore (Troy)
9. Tyler Showalter, Wayne Trace, senior (Troy)

10. David Monturi, Wickliffe, senior (Garfield Hts)
11. Jacob Smith, Utica, senior (Coshocton)
12. Brandon Soules, Allen East, junior (Troy)
13. Corey Kowatch, Mapleton, senior (Garfield Hts)
14. Garrett Grime, Archbold, junior (Fostoria)
15. Hobie Howiler, Barnesville, junior (Coshocton)
16. Bryce Coleman, Martins Ferry, senior (Coshocton)
17. Hunter Sutton, Eastwood, junior (Fostoria)

COSH – Kahl, Dingess, Smith, Howiler; Coleman, Anthony Risley (Harrison Central, junior)

FOS – Taylor, Grime, Sutton, Jordan Birdsell (Montpelier, junior); Dylan Rogers (Delta, freshman)

GH – Steiner, Monturi, Kowatch, Jake Johnson/Damon Morosko (Tuslaw, senior); TBD

TROY – Romero, Vestal, Tunon, Miller; Showalter, Soules

For better or worse, extreme specialization has become the norm within prep sports these days. However, that is not the case for one of the state's prodigal young wrestling talents. The sophomore Romero is a two-year starter at quarterback in football and also played varsity baseball during his freshman season. His Indians' football squad made the state semifinal as a freshman, and this past year suffered a highly controversial 42-41 double OT loss to eventual state champions Minster in the opening round. As a freshman, Romero was 46-1 on the way to a state title; while he is "a lot" and two this year.

The two losses for Romero came at the Walsh Ironman, 3-2 and 4-2 to a pair of nationally ranked wrestlers; while in that tournament, he beat primary state tournament contender Vestal 3-1. In his other major competition of the season, Romero won scored four pins and a 24-7 technical fall to win the Lima CC tournament in January. The junior Vestal placed second at Lake Highland Prep in Florida as a freshman before finishing a seventh at state last year. This season he was champion at Franklin, 1-2 in the Ironman (beating two-time state placer Kaminski), and fifth at Brecksville. See the commentary in the previous weight class to explain why he may end up down at 145.

Four ranked wrestlers are in the hunt for the three (or two) state spots to join Romero (and possibly Vestal) competing at the Schott from the Troy district. The senior Showalter and junior Tunon are returning state qualifiers, while the sophomore Miller and junior Soules each went 1-2 at the district level last year. Showalter was champion at Lincolnview and the Green Meadows, runner-up at Lima CC (January), and fourth (at 145) at Van Buren this season; while Tunon was champion at Fairfield and Western Brown. Miller was sixth at the GMVWA and third at Lima CC (January), while Soules was runner-up at Allen County and fourth at Lima CC (January).

The other deep district is at Coshocton, where five ranked wrestlers, including three returning state qualifiers will be after the four state tournament berths. Leading the way is the junior Kahl who went 1-2 at last year's state tournament, went 3-2 at Brecksville, and was runner-up at the OVAC. Next in line are Dingess and Smith, who each went 0-2 at the Schott last year; this year Dingess has 3-2 victory over Ziegler down at 145, with a title at Heath in this weight class, while Smith does not have a recorded result season to date. Returning district placer Howiler was fourth at the OVAC up at 160 before dropping into this weight class, and yet another drop down to the shallow 145 weight at this district is possible; while the senior Coleman was sixth at the OVAC and third at New Lexington.

Joining Romero and Vestal as the third of three returning state placers in this weight class is the senior Taylor, who placed sixth at the Schott last year. On the season he was champion at Milan Edison and

runner-up Bellevue. Taylor is joined by just two other ranked wrestlers in the Fostoria district, juniors Grime and Birdsall. During this season, Grime was fourth at Oregon Clay, including a notable win over DII state qualifier Sowards.

Also with just three ranked wrestlers is the district at Garfield Hts, though two of those wrestlers went 1-2 at state last year: the sophomore Steiner and the senior Monturi. While Steiner failed to place at Medina, he did win the Bill Dies title with wins over a pair of fellow state qualifiers, and Monturi took third at the CVC tournament. Returning district placer Kowatch was fourth at Marion Harding.

160 pounds

1. Dakota Mays, Nelsonville York, senior (Coshocton)
2. Andrew Hoskins, Dayton Christian, senior (Troy)
3. Jesse Beverly, Delta, junior (Fostoria)
4. Austin Siemon, Deer Park, senior (Troy)
5. Jake Staggs, Milan Edison, senior (Fostoria)
6. Caleb Stockmaster, Margaretta, senior (Fostoria)
7. Drew Brasiel, Manchester, senior (Garfield Hts)
8. Clayton Davdison, Kirtland, senior (Garfield Hts)
9. Kyle Ice, Waynedale, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
10. Jacob Thompson, Triad, junior (Troy)
11. Riley Tercha, Otsego, senior (Fostoria)
12. Luke Sorboro, Rootstown, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
13. Damon Vitt, Hopewell Loudon, junior (Fostoria)
14. Zach Brodman, Carey, senior (Fostoria)
15. Seth Gaghen, Woodmore, senior (Fostoria)
16. Logan Hartman, Mechanicsburg, senior (Troy)
17. Josh Doherty, West Jefferson, sophomore (Coshocton)

COSH – Mays, Doherty, Kyle Pritchard (Coshocton, senior), Austin McConville (Bellaire, senior); Drexel Weber (Garaway, senior)

FOS – Beverly, Staggs, Stockmaster, Tercha; Vitt, Brodman, Gaghen

GH – Brasiel, Davidson, Ice, Sorboro; Tucker Bender (Loudonville, senior)

TROY – Hoskins, Siemon, Thompson, Hartman; Canaan Berry (Troy Christian, senior)

The senior Mays is one of just eleven wrestlers in the Class of 2015 who can become four-time OHSAA state tournament placers (if one wishes to account for the runner-up finish from Rodriguez in New York to Nick Piccininni, that number is 12). That number is within the normal range, as there were 14 candidates headed into last year's state tournament, with just seven possibles in 2013. Having placed sixth, seventh, and fourth – Mays seeks a first state finals appearance. It's been an excellent senior with a title at Brecksville, and being undefeated other than a 13-8 loss to Marinelli (the nation's number one wrestler in this weight class).

Mays anchors what is a barren district at Coshocton in this weight class with just the sophomore Doherty, who was champion at Heath this season, among the top 17 here.

The true deep district here is the one at Fostoria, which has seven ranked wrestlers. That group is led by the sophomore Beverly, who beat Mays 2-1 in the consolation final at state. During this season, he was third at Brecksville down at 152 before moving up to 160, where he won a title at Oregon Clay but

suffered a 9-7 loss to McRill from Michigan – a wrestler that Mays beat 6-2 in the Brecksville final. Only the senior Stockmaster joins Beverly as a returning state qualifier; on the season he was champion at both Milan Edison and Bellevue.

The senior Staggs was champion at Milan Edison up a weight class before placing third at Brecksville; while fellow senior Tercha was champion at Northwood, Van Buren, and his conference along with a runner-up finish at Perrysburg. The junior Vitt was a district placer last year, and this year was champion at the Gorman before placing third at Van Buren. The senior Brodman was runner-up at Bellevue and Van Buren, won the title at Lima CC in December, and was a semifinalist at Lima CC in January; while fellow senior Gaghen was third at Northwood, Bellevue, and Lima CC (January) before a runner-up finish in his conference meet.

Third in this weight class, and last of the main contenders is the senior Hoskins, who placed at state as a freshman and sophomore before not competing during the second half of last season. He was also unavailable for the state duals, so his status going forward is unknown. Of note for him this season is an 8-2 win over Staggs at the SMCC Duals. Three other wrestlers join Hoskins in the rankings at the Troy district, including returning state placer and three-time state qualifier Siemon; who this season has titles at Centerville and Milford to go with a runner-up at SWOWCA and fourth at GMVWA.

Also ranked at Troy is the junior Thompson, the champion at Marion Harding and Lima CC, as well as third at Bellbrook; and the senior Hartman who qualified in the opening weight class as a freshman, and this season was runner-up at Lima CC (January), along with having a win over Sepeda on the opening Saturday of the season. Should Hoskins be unavailable that (obviously) opens up a state qualification spot, one that his teammate Jansen Love could be in the hunt for; dropping down from 170.

Rounding it out is a district at Garfield Hts that features four ranked wrestlers, including a returning state eighth, state qualifier, and two state alternates. That returning state placer is the senior Brasiel, who has been out since having to injury default early on at Brecksville, so his status is unknown. The state qualifier is fellow senior Davidson, who is undefeated on the season, including a title at the CVC. Returning state alternates are sophomores Ice and Soroboro; Soroboro was champion in the 170 weight class at Aurora before dropping to 160 to finish third at the Bill Dies. Should Brasiel remain out, it would open up state qualification for someone like Bender, who was runner-up at the Gorman but just went 1-2 at the Top Gun.

170 pounds

1. James Handwerk, Lutheran West, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
2. Ryan Patchin, Delta, senior (Fostoria)
3. Zach Sullivan, National Trial, senior (Troy)
4. Chance Sonnenberg, Van Buren, senior (Fostoria)
5. Kile Schaefer, West Salem Northwestern, senior (Garfield Hts)
6. Hayden Miller, Norwalk St. Paul, senior (Fostoria)
7. Austin Windle, Ada, senior (Troy)
8. Ryan Green, Margaretta, senior (Fostoria)
9. Teagan McFadden, Paint Valley, junior (Coshocton)
10. Jared Pack, Centerburg, senior (Coshocton)
11. Matt McFarland, Union Local, junior (Coshocton)
12. Kamran Alexander, Deer Park, senior (Troy)
13. Skylar Brown, Lehman Catholic, senior (Troy)

14. Adam Deatrck, Paulding, senior (Fostoria)
15. Chase Carpenter, Sherwood Fairview, senior (Fostoria)
16. Drew Lowery, Toronto, junior (Coshocton)

COSH – McFadden, Pack, McFarland, Lowery; Corbin Bunsold (North Union, junior)

FOS – Patchin, Sonnenberg, Miller, Green; Deatrck, Carpenter

GH – Handwerk, Schaefer, Drew Lowery (Loudonville, senior), Gaige Willis (Pymatuning Valley, freshman); Paul Dies (Manchester, junio)

TROY – Sullivan, Windle, Alexander, Brown; Josh Kirby (Middletown Madison, senior)

From a weight class that features eleven state qualifiers, including six that placed at state last year, it is instead a sophomore that was a scratch from the district tournament last year who has emerged as the favorite. However, it's not a name that is from total left field for wrestling fans, as Handwerk was a junior high state champion in 2013 and a Cadet All-American in Greco-Roman that summer. He was also a Cadet double All-American this past summer. Injury (and some inconsistency) seemed to dampen his freshman year performance, while this year both factors have been eliminated. He was seventh at the Ironman and champion at Medina to set an early tone.

Handwerk exits the weakest district at this weight class, as the one at Garfield Hts features just one other ranked wrestler, two-time state placer Schaefer. Interestingly, Schaefer has placed twice fifth at 182 pounds, before sliding down here this season. He lost 10-2 to Handwerk in the Medina semifinal before defaulting down to sixth.

Three other returning state placers, and a fourth state qualifier, are among the six ranked wrestlers at Fostoria. That group is led by the senior Patchin, who was sixth at 182 pounds last year. This season, he finished runner-up at Brecksville and Oregon Clay with a title at Perrysburg. Fellow senior Sonnenberg has twice placed fifth at 160 pounds, and this season went 3-2 at the Ironman (including a 5-2 front side loss to Sullivan) along with winning titles at Northwood, Van Buren, and Lima CC (January). The third returning state placer is Miller, who was sixth at Brecksville along with runner-up finishes at the Gorman and the January Lima CC event (losing 6-1 to Sonnenberg there). Returning state qualifier Green was runner-up at Milan Edison early in the season; while the senior Deatrck was a go-to-state match loser last year, and this year has finished second in two tournaments and third in another. Rounding it out is the junior Carpenter, who has been at both 170 and 182 this year, so it might behoove him to explore the 182 path.

The highest returning state placer in this weight class is the senior Sullivan, who placed third here last year, and this year went 2-2 at the Ironman; while his other loss was 7-5 to Schram in finishing runner-up at Eaton. The other three ranked wrestlers at the Troy district are a returning state placer, state qualifier, and state alternate. The senior Windle placed seventh at state last year, and this year was champion at Lincolnview (pin over Brown); the senior Alexander qualified for state last year; while fellow senior Brown was runner-up at Lincolnview, champion at Lima CC (December), and a semifinalist at the CIT.

Wrapping it up is a Coshocton district that features four state ranked wrestlers, three of whom are returning state qualifiers. That group is led by the junior McFadden, who has the lone state tournament win of that trio. The senior Pack went two-and-out in this weight class at the Schott last year, while this year he has titles at Marion Harding and Marion Pleasant to his credit; while the junior McFarland did

the same exact thing last year at state, and this year was runner-up at the OVAC meet. The other ranked wrestler here is the junior Lowery, who was third at the OVAC and champion at Wellsville.

182 pounds

1. Kollin Moore, Norwayne, senior (Garfield Hts)
2. Ben Miller, Covington, senior (Troy)
3. Jack Huffman, Lima Central Catholic, senior (Troy)
4. Jack Staggs, Milan Edison, junior (Fostoria)
5. Mark Francis, Delta, senior (Fostoria)
6. Kyle Johnson, Northmor, senior (Coshocton)
7. Caleb Johnson, Paint Valley, junior (Coshocton)
8. John Kelbly, Smithville, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
9. Jeffrey Botts, Bethel Tate, junior (Troy)
10. Tyler Faust, Delphos Jefferson, senior (Troy)
11. Travis Pickering, Mapleton, senior (Garfield Hts)
12. Christian Climer, Tuslaw, senior (Garfield Hts)
13. Anthony Italiano, Jackson Milton, junior (Garfield Hts)
14. Peyton Hamrick, Parkway, junior (Troy)
15. Josh Bialosky, Beachwood, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
16. Colton Lybarger, Fredericktown, senior (Coshocton)

COSH – K. Johnson, C. Johnson, Lybarger, Dalton Hoover (Martins Ferry, freshman); Ben Hostetler (Ridgewood, senior)

FOS – Staggs, Francis, Dan Henline (Gibsonburg, senior), Tyler Baird (Genoa, senior); Luke Bowman (Riverdale, senior)

GH – Moore, Kelbly, Pickering, Climer; Italiano, Bialosky

TROY – Miller, Huffman, Botts, Faust; Hamrick

In case you forgot what was written in the second paragraph of this whole report, or didn't read it in the first place, a discussion was had about Kollin Moore. The two-time state runner-up has seen a massive leap within his performance, and has become in all probability the best senior in the Buckeye State this year. Quite frankly, there was no sign of this coming based on his productivity in the spring/summer period (runner-up at NHSCA Juniors and Disney Duals bronze medal is solid stuff, not earth shattering).

What is staggering is finishing runner-up at the Super 32 Challenge less than two weeks after completing a high school soccer season, then scoring a tech-pin against projected Division I state champion Darmstadt in the Bill Dies final (i.e. if the pin doesn't occur, the match would have ended in a tech fall).

With that said, Tom Ryan and the Ohio State staff scored a coup to secure a verbal out of Moore during the summer, before this emergence. He's the overwhelming favorite in this weight class, one that happens just to feature two other returning state placers. Both those wrestlers – fellow seniors Miller and Huffman – exit the district tournament at Troy, which also includes three other ranked wrestlers.

Miller placed sixth down a weight class last year, and this year was fourth at the GMVWA (up at 195) before taking second at Troy (15-4 loss to projected Division II champ Harris) and winning the title at Lima CC in January (5-2 over Huffman). Huffman placed seventh up a weight class last year, and suffered a pair of losses in December to Buettner at 195 before making the drop. Since dropping to this weight class, he was third at the CIT and runner-up at Lima CC (January). Botts was a state alternate last year

down one weight class, and this year was fourth at SWOWCA as well as taking second at Miami Trace. The senior Faust was a go-to-state match loser in this weight last year, and has four tournament titles this season; while the junior Hamrick was runner-up to Faust at Lincolnview.

Circling back to Moore, he exits the deepest district in all at the weight class. The other five wrestlers ranked at Garfield Hts are in hunt for three state spots behind Moore. None are a threat to upend Moore, all are ranked eighth or lower. On top of that ladder is the sophomore Kelbly, who won a title at Smithville. Two returning state alternates are ranked here in this weight class, Pickering and Italiano; Pickering won the title at Marion Harding, while Italiano was fifth at Solon and seventh the Hephner. The senior Climer has dropped down into this weight class after placing fifth (at 195) at North Canton; while the sophomore Bialosky missed the bulk of the season after placing at this weight last year at district, though he was runner-up at CVC to a non-ranked wrestler since his return.

Ranked fourth and fifth in this weight class division are returning state qualifiers exiting the district at Fostoria. The junior Staggs was champion at Milan Edison, 0-2 at the Ironman, but has missed a significant portion since then; while the senior Francis started the season at 170 before flipping spots with Patchin. Since moving to 182, Francis was third at Perrysburg and Oregon Clay. Given that these are the lone ranked wrestlers at the district, and the status of Staggs is an open question, this could be a soft landing spot seeing the abundance of ranked wrestlers in the weight classes above and below.

Closing it out here is a district at Coshocton that features just three ranked wrestlers, led by a pair that went two-and-out at the Schott last year. The senior Kyle Johnson was runner-up at the Gorman and champion at Marion Pleasant in this weight class, after finishing fourth up at 195 at Marion Harding; while the junior Caleb Johnson has also spent time at both 182 and 195. No other wrestler won more than one match at district in this weight class last year. The third ranked wrestler here is the senior Lybarger, who was fourth at the Gorman.

195 pounds

1. Jacob Worthington, Milan Edison, senior (Fostoria)
2. Kyle Dieringer, Versailles, senior (Troy)
3. Tristan Anderson, Waynedale, junior (Garfield Hts)
4. Wes Buettener, Delphos St. John's, senior (Troy)
5. Scott Wohlheter, Tuslaw, senior (Garfield Hts)
6. Dom Johns, Coshocton, senior (Coshocton)
7. Garrett Dudte, Mapleton, senior (Garfield Hts)
8. Colton Booth, Tri-County North, senior (Troy)
9. Drake Reed, Margareta, senior (Fostoria)
10. Will Bolanz, Waterloo, sophomore (Garfield Hts)
11. Gavin Saul, Sherwood Fairview, senior (Fostoria)
12. Kent Petersen, Patrick Henry, sophomore (Fostoria)
13. Ryan Slone, Black River, senior (Garfield Hts)
14. Madison Jaso, Gibsonburg, sophomore (Fostoria)
15. Matt Rainey, Swanton, senior (Fostoria)
16. Lane Foster, Northmor, senior (Coshocton)

COSH – Johns, Foster, Mitchell Peck (Utica, senior), Corey Taylor (West Muskingum, junior); Caide Bunfill (Barnesville, sophomore)

FOS – Worthington, Reed, Saul, Petersen; Jaso, Rainey

GH – Anderson, Wohlheter, Dudte, Bolanz; Slone

TROY – Dieringer, Buettner, Booth, Tristan Devlin (Troy Christian, senior); Jarod Woodland (Ada, senior)

Two senior in this weight class have fractionally placed themselves ahead of the field in two-time state placer Worthington and returning state placer Dieringer. Worthington, who placed the last two years at 182 pounds while competing for Keystone (Division III in 2013, Division II in 2014) had to miss the first half of the season, but since returning has a pair of wins over returning state placer Anderson. He anchors the deepest district in this weight class, the one at Fostoria with six ranked wrestlers in all.

None of the other five are a true threat to Worthington, so they're seeking three other state spots. The senior Reed was a go-to-state match loser up a weight class last year at 220 pounds, won two tournaments in early December at that weight class, but has since made the drop. Next on the district ladder is the senior Saul, who won his conference tournament, and beat returning state qualifier Francis 10-9 in dual meet competition. The sophomore Petersen qualified for state last year, and this year was runner-up at Lima CC in December before taking fourth at Lima CC in January. Fellow sophomore Jaso was champion at Van Buren and his league meet; while the senior Rainey was champion at Northwood and runner-up in three other tournaments this season.

The other deep district in this weight class is at Garfield Hts, where five ranked wrestlers are competing, led by a state placer and two others that won a match last year at the Schott. The junior Anderson is the returning state placer, having finished fourth at state last year; this year he finished runner-up to Worthington at Marion County. The senior Wohlheter qualified for state in this weight class last year, and this year finished top eight at North Canton along with fifth at Medina; while fellow state qualifier Bolanz did so last year as a freshman down a weight class. Ranked between Wohlheter and Bolanz in this district's ladder is the senior Dudte, who was third at Marion Harding (quarterfinal loss in the tiebreak to Buettner, consolation final win over a returning state qualifier) and lost narrowly (2-0) to Anderson in late January. Rounding out the ranked group in this district is the senior Slone, who was a go-to-state match loser last year up at 220 pounds. This year he was seventh at Marion Harding, fifth at the Gorman, and first at Willard.

Three returning state qualifiers exit the Troy district, but they are the only three ranked wrestlers at present. Leading the way is returning state third place finisher Dieringer, who has titles at Sidney and the GMVWA, along with a runner-up finish at Oregon Clay (5-4 win over projected Division II champ Kremiller in the semifinal, 7-1 loss to projected Division I champ Stencil). Returning state qualifier Buettner is up two weight classes from last year, and has won titles at four different tournaments this season (including two victories over returning state placer Huffman). The third state experience wrestler is the senior Booth, who was third at Lima CC in January. State alternate Devlin and district placer Woodland are also in this weight class, but not among the sixteen ranked; while one could see Svarda drop down here and make life more unpleasant than it already is here.

Wrapping it up here is a rather barren district at Coshocton (seems like that's been typed many times in this report). At present there are just two ranked wrestlers here, the returning state placer Johns and the senior Foster. The senior Johns was seventh last year at 182 pounds, and has been deliberating between that weight class and this one; while Foster was up at 220 early in the season (runner-up at Big Walnut) before returning state qualifier Kyle Johnson dropped, which enabled him to slide in here. In competition at 195, Foster failed to place at the Gorman and was champion at Marion Pleasant. Third in the ladder at this district, though not ranked top 16, is returning state alternate Peck.

220 pounds

1. Jay Nino, Genoa, senior (Fostoria)
2. Ben Sullivan, National Trail, sophomore (Troy)
3. Cameron Conaway, South Central, junior (Fostoria)
4. Adrian Harding, Greeneview, senior (Troy)
5. Nick Svarda, Middletown Madison, junior (Troy)
6. Devin Richards, Delta, junior (Fostoria)
7. Jared Crowell, Bishop Hartley, junior (Coshocton)
8. Jerek Cropper, Manchester, junior (Garfield Hts)
9. Dan Jones, Columbus Academy, senior (Coshocton)
10. Collin Kelly, Mogadore, junior (Garfield Hts)
11. Michael Furbee, St. Clairsville, junior (Coshocton)
12. Donald Moore, Waynesville, senior (Troy)
13. Charlie Smith, Hanoverton United, senior (Garfield Hts)
14. Hunter Bodkin, Martins Ferry, freshman (Coshocton)
15. Kyle Gigandet, Versailles, junior (Troy)
16. Tanner Potts, Monroe Central, junior (Coshocton)
17. Devin Uzelac, Elmwood, senior (Fostoria)

COSH – Crowell, Jones, Furbee, Bodkin; Potts

FOS – Nino, Conaway, Richards, Uzelac; Marcus O’Flaherty (Carey, junior)

GH – Cropper, Kelly, Smith, Zach Hackett (Brookfield, junior); Sam Fuchs (Canton C.C., senior)

TROY – Sullivan, Harding, Svarda, Moore; Gigandet, Billy Cadaweller (Williamsburg, senior)

In any weight class, especially an upper weight, it is rare to see four of the top finishers from the previous year’s state tournament all back to compete again in the weight class. However, that is the case here; as both finalists, along with the fourth and fifth place finishers, return. Three of those placers, including the defending state champion exit the Fostoria district.

The senior Nino is the returning state champion in this weight class. He started the season at 285 pounds, where he fell a match short of placing at the Walsh Ironman; since then, he dropped to this weight class and won titles at Perrysburg (5-1 over Richards) and the NBC. The junior Conaway placed fourth at state, and actually won the district tournament last year; while this season, he won a title at Willard. Fellow junior Richards was actually fourth at the district before taking fifth at state. This year he was third at Brecksville, runner-up at Perrysburg, and champion at Oregon Clay. The fourth spot here is an open competition, with the senior Uzelac tabbed as the pick for purposes of this publication.

By making the finals last year at 220 as a freshman, Sullivan earned the distinction of being the “biggest” freshman to ever make the state final. His state semifinal win came over Conaway by 3-2 decision, after pinning Richards in the opening round, and before losing by fall to Nino in the final. This year he was fourth at the Ironman and first at Eaton (5-2 over fellow state qualifier Human). Sullivan anchors the Troy district, which in present composition has four other ranked wrestlers.

Leading that challenge pack is the senior Harding, a returning state qualifier, who this season was fourth at the GMVWA before winning three different tournament titles. Next in line is the junior Svarda, who was 2-2 in district tournament competition while at Division II Carlisle last year; in addition, he could end up competing at 195 pounds. On the season, he was runner-up at Harding at Bellbrook (3-1 loss) before

winning a title at Reading. The senior Moore is a returning state alternate, and this season won a title at Centerville; while the junior Gigandet was first at Sidney and third at Oregon Clay.

Also with five ranked wrestlers is the district at Coshocton, which also features three returning state qualifiers. It's led by the junior Croswell, the only one of the three to actually win a match at the Schott last year; while this season he was champion at Olentangy Liberty before failing to place at the GMVWA, and subsequently placed third at the CIT and second at Groveport Madison. Next is the senior Jones, a two-time state qualifier, though he has yet to win a match at state; while the junior Potts was fifth at the OVAC with losses to two contestants in this district tournament (3-1 to Bodkin, 4-2 to Furbee). The junior Furbee was third at the OVAC with wins over Potts and Bodkin (1-0); while the freshman Bodkin was a junior high state runner-up last year, and this year placed fourth at the OVAC.

Last here is the Garfield Hts district, which features just three ranked wrestlers, led by the junior Cropper who did not wrestle last season due to injury. This season, he came back with a storm finishing runner-up at Brecksville and winning a title at the Gorman (pinning Chaney along the way), before taking fourth at the Dies. Fellow junior Kelly was eighth at the Bill Dies, but beat Cropper 5-3 in a late January dual meet; while the senior Smith was a state qualifier last year at 285 pounds, but failed to place at North Canton this season.

285 pounds

1. Chance Veller, Delta, junior (Fostoria)
2. Blake Cary, Loudonville, senior (Garfield Hts)
3. Seth Bloor, Wellsville, senior (Garfield Hts)
4. Jon Bodkin, Martins Ferry, senior (Coshocton)
5. Paul Deely, Independence, senior (Garfield Hts)
6. Brandon Workman, Collins Western Reserve, senior (Fostoria)
7. Isaac Sexton, Van Buren, senior (Fostoria)
8. Mike Mollohan, Mt. Gilead, junior (Coshocton)
9. Ben Ferguson, Miami East, junior (Troy)
10. Kelly Barthalow, Ridgewood, senior (Coshocton)
11. Isaiah Harding, Greeneview, sophomore (Troy)
12. Brandon Bennett, Patrick Henry, junior (Fostoria)
13. Chance Rucker, Caldwell, junior (Coshocton)
14. Derek Smith, Defiance Tinora, sophomore (Fostoria)
15. Nick Gelhaus, Madeira, junior (Troy)
16. Justin Kilburn, Monroe Central, junior (Coshocton)

COSH – Bodkin, Mollohan, Barthalow, Rucker; Kilburn

FOS – Veller, Workman, Sexton, Bennett; Smith

GH – Cary, Bloor, Deely, Jacob Zimmerman (Orrville, junior); Charlie Draucker (Trinity, junior)

TROY – Ferguson, Harding, Gelhaus, Blake Sampson (Bluffton, junior); Reilly Lipinski (Tri-County North, senior)

Though eight wrestlers return in this weight class with state experience, just two placed at the state tournament previously. One of those two, the junior Veller, will enter the state series as the favorite. His emergence as a clear lead-dog in this weight class is one of the reasons that Delta should be able to repeat as champions in the individual state meet. Already this season, he placed third at the Ironman

and Oregon Clay, with titles at Brecksville and Perrysburg; he has six wins over returning Ohio state tournament placers.

The district that he exits at Fostoria has four other ranked wrestlers in the hunt for the remaining three state spots. The senior Workman is a returning state alternate, who was runner-up at Milan Edison and Bellevue this season; while the fellow senior Sexton as sixth at district last year, and this year has won tournaments at Northwood and Lima CC (January). The junior Bennett was first at Lima CC in December, before taking third in the January Lima CC event. Finally, Smith was state alternate last year as a freshman down at 220 pounds, and this year was fifth at Perrysburg and first in his conference tournament.

The other state placer is the senior Bodkin, who placed fifth at state last year, including a consolation quarterfinal win over Veller. This season, he was runner-up at the OVAC (losing in the tiebreaker to Bloor) and did win the title at New Lexington. Bodkin exits the other deep district at this weight class, as there are four other ranked wrestlers present at Coshocton, including two other returning state qualifiers in Mollohan and Barthalow. The junior Mollhoan was runner-up at both Marion Harding and Lima Senior this season, while the senior Barthalow joined Mollohan in winning a state tournament match last year. The junior Rucker was runner-up at Gallia and fifth at the OVAC meet with a pair of wins over Kilburn, the other ranked wrestler at this site; the fellow junior was state alternate in this weight class last year, and this season was sixth at the OVAC meet.

Two other state qualifiers, both of whom won a match, will exit the Garfield Hts district. However, the top-ranked wrestler here (2nd overall) is a senior that went two-and-out last year in the 182 pound weight class at the district tournament. On the season, Cary was fourth at the Gorman (losing 6-5 to McCoy in the semifinal), runner-up at the Top Gun and Central Crossing, along with winning the Hephner (including a 5-1 win over Urban in the semifinal). The senior Bloor qualified for state last year at 220 pounds, and this year was champion at both the OVAC and Wellsville; while fellow senior Deely placed fifth at the North Coast, sixth at Medina, and third at the CVC. The fourth projected qualification spot would be taken by a non-ranked wrestler.

Rounding it out is the district at Troy, which feature just three ranked wrestlers, two of whom are returning state qualifiers. The junior Ferguson leads the ladder here despite going two-and-out at last year's state tournament; this season he has finished runner-up in three different tournaments (twice to Cloud, the other time at Lima CC in January, losing 10-4 to Sexton). Also returning as a state qualifier is fellow junior Gelhaus, who failed to place at the Lima CC (January) event. The sophomore Harding is the other ranked wrestler; this season he placed sixth at the GMVWA, runner-up at Beaver creek, champion at Bellbrook, and fourth at Lima CC (January).

Team Board

1. Delta <Fostoria>; 2. Dayton Christian <Troy>
(If Lacure and A. Hoskins end up being available they win; if just one it's a dead heat)
3. Milan Edison <Fostoria>
4. Mechanicsburg <Troy>
5. Covington <Troy>
6. Norwayne <Garfield Hts>
7. Troy Christian <Troy>
8. Genoa <Fostoria>
9. Waynedale <Garfield Hts>; 10. Tuslaw <Garfield Hts>