

## **2018 Ranger Report**

### **Kentucky High School State Wrestling Championship Preview**

Yes, it's the end of another hard fought KY high school wrestling season, but it is one that is unlike any other for Dutch and I anyway. Seasons come and seasons go, but we will be watching our boys compete in the Alltech Arena for the last time. I realize that many, many of you have been in our shoes over the previous years and even decades. Now we know exactly how you feel. Sad-exciting times all rolled up in one. Luckily for me, I have another one coming through to delay my total depression. Not looking forward to revisiting this in 4 years.

What a great group of seniors. I am a little biased given all of the hours of training I've spent with these young men from all over the state and miles we have traveled across the country to compete together. When I think back to some of our glory days with MS Team Ky (Bender, Tucker, Moore, Roth, Johnson, Smallwood, Smith, Leavell, along with a ton of others including younger guys as well) it has been a fun ride. These guys were not always super studs, but have used hard work and effort to improve and develop into some of the best in our state.

So, back to the wrestling. Four months ago we kicked off the season with the third All Star Classic. As usual a great day of wrestling. Awesome to see kids from all over the state show up to participate and to see a little freestyle action with the young guns. This season has seen some new kids emerge as stars in our sport, but we have also seen a lot of familiar faces continue their winning ways. On a negative note, we have seen a lot of injuries impact a lot of kids and teams. We were blessed to see a few big names make their way back on the mat (Mason Smith, Zane Brown, Jake Insko to name a few), but unfortunately many others will not be wrestling this weekend due to serious injuries derailing their year. Again, enjoy and appreciate your time at state. Don't take it for granted.

This time of year always brings up the seeding discussion. Following is a repost of last year's report.

The following was taken from TheMat.com regarding seeding:

#### **Why Seeding Matters**

Every year, there is a lot of confusion as to how conference tournaments and NCAAs are seeded. Many coaches and athletes will tell you, "seeds don't matter" because what happens on the mat determines who advances, and to win it all you need to beat whoever's in your path. But in reality, seeds (and also rankings throughout the season in general) matter A LOT for at least four important reasons:

1. Because fans are entertained so much by rankings, they are automatically critical to the sport. Rankings and seeding (which is just a subset of rankings) are instrumental to drawing fan interest to any sport. I'd go as far as to say no other topic is debated more consistently and with as much fervor by fans as seeding/rankings--and this is for most major sports, not just wrestling. Rankings and in particular seeding make it easier for the average fan to follow the sport, are often used as the basis for making predictions (which is the thing fans most like to do), and are a key input for bookmakers setting betting odds.
2. Rankings give major media outlets a general sense of which matches and athletes to cover to maximize fan interest.

Conference tournaments and NCAAs are among the hardest sporting events of any kind for media to follow. While it's nice that ESPN now covers the entire NCAA tournament online, a tiny percentage of fans see even 1/4 of that action. How the fan base broadly perceives the events is defined first and foremost by how the media covers these events.

3. Seeds provide an important incentive for teams and athletes to excel during the regular season. Admittedly, this can be a double-edged sword, since every year, several coaches make line-up decisions by giving at least partial consideration to how rankings/seeding will be impacted, which can lead to "seed protection." But more often, there is a strong incentive to wrestle so as to build a body of work to maximize your chances for a high seed.

4. Not everyone is Logan Stieber or Alex Dieringer.

The notion of an "easier path" to the finals absolutely exists in reality. Not all the time, not for every weight, but to think otherwise is foolish. Not having to wrestle a pigtail, getting a bye, wrestling weaker guys to start the tournament with an easier early match (particularly important for the big weight cutters), being on the opposite side of the guys who are bad match-ups, etc. all matter. Also, not everyone's goal is to be an NCAA champion. I know Gable would skewer me for saying this, but there are LOTS of wrestlers who would absolutely "sign on the dotted line" for an 8th place finish before nationals. I certainly would've back in the day.

A couple interesting items we should watch out for this weekend:

- 1) Without any 4-timer type wrestlers in the field, do we have a MOW frontrunner or will that award truly come down to who performs best at the Horse Park? Or will Saul get the nod if he is able to win his 3rd title?
- 2) REPEAT: Who will win 120? Again, possibly the deepest weight class in the tournament from 1-14 with a state champ, state finalists, and multiple placers should have the crowd's attention from the opening round.
- 3) REPEAT with a slight variation: Who will step up to win a wide open 195 weight class?
- 4) REPEAT: Can anyone hang with Union County? Broken record. They proved they were the best dual team in the state 2 weeks ago at Lindsey Wilson and this weekend they are the obvious favorites. Can Walton or X beat them? Or can a wild card like Madison Central or Woodford Co jump up and push them?
- 5) The KYWCA made some awesome upgrades for the wrestlers last year. Hopefully, we can continue to work together and move this event and our sport forward for the benefit of all the hard working kids around Kentucky.

Final rankings were posted previously. This document is predicted finishes based on the final rankings and the draw. The winner of each matchup in the bracket is based on rankings, not any sort of prediction as to who we think will win. As usual, I'm sure we missed our fair share of results (some coaches are really, really bad at keeping track up to date), so they are not perfect. They also do not reflect any scratches that have come in the last day or so (I literally just heard from a coach about an update 15 minutes ago). And even IF they were perfect rankings, upsets always happen on the big stage.

As always, Dutch and I have put in hours and hours on rankings and this report. Thanks to Stacy for not meeting me at the door with a gun over the last few very late nights and Amber for actually letting me back in the house at 3 am night after night. It is impossible to pull all of this information together alone. And Dutch has been a huge part of getting this great report out.

Good luck to all of the wrestlers! Enjoy this weekend; the days go by way too fast.

## Report Audit

### How the predicted individual champions fared?

	<u>11 Year Average</u>			<u>2017</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	
Won title	9.3	66.2%	10	71.4%	
Finished 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1.9	13.6%	2	14.3%	
Finished 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1.9	13.6%	1	7.1%	
Finished 4 <sup>th</sup>	0.2	1.3%	0	0.0%	
<u>*Lower than 4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>5.2%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	
TOTAL	14	100%	14	100%	

\*total of 8 predicted champs have finished outside the top 4 in the last 11 years (2007 – Korey Shotwell Campbell Co 130 DNP, 2010 - Jake Lee Campbell Co 160 7th, Tyler Crow Meade Co 215 DNP, 2012 – Trevor Ford Desales 285 DNP, 2013 – Cody Stephens McCreary Central 106 DNP, Sam Preston Johnson Central 195 6th, 2015 - Hudson Heidorf Trinity 145 5th, 2017 - Landin Jones North Oldham 285 did not wrestle due to injury)

### Who won the individual state title?

	<u>11 Year Average</u>			<u>2017</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	
Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	9.3	66.2%	10	71.4%	
Ranked 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2.4	16.9%	1	7.1%	
Ranked 3 <sup>rd</sup>	0.7	5.2%	1	7.1%	
Ranked 4 <sup>th</sup>	0.7	5.2%	0	0.0%	
<u>*Lower than 4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>6.5%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>14.3%</u>	
TOTAL	14	100%	14	100%	

\*total of 10 individuals won the state title who were predicted to finish outside the top 4 in the last 11 years (2007 - Darwin Perez Larue Co 130 6th, Derek Nickel Doss 215 6th, 2008 - Shane Parks Woodford Co 125 8th, Dakota Choate PRP 152 6th, 2011 - Thomas Buckman Union Co 189 6th, 2013 – Jorge Vega Fern Creek 106 5th, 2015 – Geordan Blanton Johnson Central 145 6th, 2016 - Grant Krueger Ashland Blazer 195 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - David Woods Calloway Co 195 13<sup>th</sup>, Bryan Pratt Meade Co 220 9<sup>th</sup>)

### Who placed?

	<u>11 Year Average</u>			<u>2017</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	
Predicted Top 8	5.9	73.9%	6.1	76.3%	
Predicted 9 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup>	1.2	14.5%	1.3	16.3%	
Predicted 13 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup>	0.5	6.0%	0.5	6.3%	
<u>Predicted below 16<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>5.6%</u>	<u>0.1</u>	<u>1.3%</u>	
TOTAL	8	100%	8	100%	

## How the predicted team champions fared and who placed high?

2007

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Woodford Co.	Union Co.	Larue Co.	Paul Dunbar*	Fern Creek
	Union Co.	Woodford Co.	North Hardin	Fern Creek	Larue Co.
*Paul Dunbar finished 8 <sup>th</sup>					

2008

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Union Co.	Campbell Co.*	Ryle	Trinity	Wayne Co.
	Union Co.	Ryle	Woodford Co.	Trinity	Wayne Co.
*Campbell Co. finished 6 <sup>th</sup>					

2009

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Trinity	Ryle	Campbell Co.	Union Co.	Larue Co.*
	Trinity	Union Co.	Ryle	Campbell Co.	Johnson Central
*Larue Co. finished 7 <sup>th</sup>					

2010

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Ryle	Trinity	Campbell Co*	Johnson Cen	Larue Co
	Trinity	Ryle	Union Co	Johnson Cen	Larue Co
*Campbell Co finished 6 <sup>th</sup>					

2011

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Trinity	Union Co	Ryle	Larue Co	Johnson Central*
	Union Co	Trinity	Ryle	Larue Co	St. Xavier
*Johnson Central finished 7 <sup>th</sup>					

2012

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Campbell Co	Larue Co	Union Co	Johnson Central*	Trinity
	Campbell Co	Union Co	Trinity	Larue Co	Simon Kenton
*Johnson Central finished 6 <sup>th</sup>					

2013

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Campbell Co	Union Co	St. Xavier	Simon Kenton	Johnson Central*
	St. Xavier	Campbell Co	Union Co	Woodford Co	Simon Kenton
*Johnson Central finished 14 <sup>th</sup>					

2014

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Union Co	Campbell Co	St. Xavier	Trinity	Woodford Co
	Union Co	Campbell Co	Trinity	St. Xavier	Woodford Co

2015

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Union Co	Trinity	Fern Creek	Campbell Co	St. Xavier*
	Fern Creek	Union Co	Trinity	Campbell Co	Oldham Co
*St. Xavier finished 8 <sup>th</sup>					

2016

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Union Co	Oldham Co	North Oldham*	Campbell Co*	Trinity
	Union Co	Woodford Co	Oldham Co	Trinity	St. Xavier
*North Oldham finished 6 <sup>th</sup> , Campbell Co finished 7 <sup>th</sup>					

2017

Predicted	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>
Actual	Union Co	St. Xavier	Walton-Verona	Woodford Co	Johnson Central
	Union Co	St. Xavier	Johnson Central	Woodford Co	Walton-Verona

## 106 lbs.

**Favorite: Sam Grandstaff (9, Conner)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Isham Peace (9, Walton Verona)          | 14. Matthew Moore (10, Union Co)         |
| 3. Jeffrey Kinley (8, Madison Central)     | 15. Aubrey Burke (10, Valley)            |
| 4. Cole Thomas (8, Ryle)                   | 16. July Soe (10, Iroquois)              |
| 5. Dylan Walls (8, Caldwell Co)            | 17. Andrew Vogeler (10, Sheldon Clark)   |
| 6. Jayssen Hanson (9, St. Xavier)          | 18. Keenan Dick (9, Wayne Co)            |
| 7. Gage Fowler (9, Christian Co)           | 19. Tyler Armstead (11, Oldham Co)       |
| 8. Donovan Evans (10, Pleasure Ridge Park) | 20. Jayden Frazier (8, McCracken County) |
| 9. Gavin Andreoni (8, Woodford Co)         | 21. David Griffith (9, Meade Co)         |
| 10. Devon Herron (8, North Hardin)         | 22. Jack McCubbin (7, South Oldham)      |
| 11. David Gerkin (9, Apollo)               | 23. Gage Hill (9, Western Hills)         |
| 12. Yahir Menchaca (9, Harrison Co)        | 24. Matthew Embry (8, Henry Clay)        |
| 13. Jacob Cain (8, Johnson Central)        | 25. Brandon Bruner (9, Bryan Station)    |

Returning placers: No returning state placers

Early round matches to watch: **2nd Round:** #4 Cole Thomas vs. #10 Jacob Cain, #7 Gage Fowler vs. #8 Donovan Evans. Quarters: #1 Jacob Grandstaff vs. #5 Dylan Walls, #3 Jeffery Kinley vs. #9 Gavin Andreoni, #2 Isham Peace vs. #6 Jayssen Hanson, #4 Cole Thomas vs. #7 Gage Fowler.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Jayssen Hanson - looked great at State Duals beating 4 state qualifiers

Team title race implications: Peace and Hanson hit in the quarters with the winner guaranteed a podium spot and a big edge in the team race. Kinley is a key component for Madison Central making a run toward a team trophy; placing top 4 is a must. Andreoni is projected to make it to the blood round while Moore is expected to win a couple matches for Union County. Another win or two could be huge team points for these guys.

The 106 weight class doesn't have the proven HS wrestlers of years past, but that doesn't mean it lacks talent. Five wrestlers in this bracket are previous MS state champions along with multiple other MS state placers. So these kids know what it is like to compete at a state level event, but how will that translate for their first HS state competition in The Barn (aka AllTech Arena). Grandstaff is undefeated at this weight and won a tough Region 6 tournament, which included #2 Peace and #4 Thomas, in dominant fashion.

## 113 lbs.

**Favorite: Thomas Deck (10, Madison Central)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Brandon Miller (12, Taylor Co)            | 14. Dalton Lawson (10, Johnson Central)  |
| 3. Shay Horton (11, Ryle)                    | 15. Michael Conner (7, McCracken County) |
| 4. Brendan Pye (11, Scott)                   | 16. Eric Johnson (9, Simon Kenton)       |
| 5. Thomas Hoppes (9, Larue Co)               | 17. Mauro Lopez (12, Wayne Co)           |
| 6. Adam Bender (12, Woodford Co)             | 18. Hayden Sheroan (11, Henry Clay)      |
| 7. Joseph Morgan (11, Apollo)                | 19. Evan Allen (12, DeSales)             |
| 8. Paul Perry (11, Valley)                   | 20. Alexei Royar (9, Fort Campbell)      |
| 9. Morgan Sallee (10, Danville)              | 21. James Jones (9, Caldwell Co)         |
| 10. Nathan Ohlmann (10, St. Xavier)          | 22. Gabe Bobay (10, North Oldham)        |
| 11. Austin Hedges (10, Trinity (Louisville)) | 23. Xavier Rogers (9, Pike Co Central)   |
| 12. Austin Gibson (12, Christian Co)         | 24. Brandon Myers (12, Bullitt Central)  |
| 13. Brett Shea (12, Oldham Co)               | 25. Spencer Moore (8, Walton Verona)     |

Returning placers: Brandon Miller 2nd @ 106, Brendan Pye 3rd @ 106, Adam Bender 3rd @ 113, Thomas Deck 4th @ 106, Shay Horton 5th @ 113

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #1 Thomas Deck vs. #5 Thomas Hoppes, #3 Shay Horton vs. #6 Joseph Morgan, #4 Brendan Pye vs. #9 Paul Perry. Quarters: #7 Adam Bender vs. #3 Shay Horton, #8 Morgan Sallee vs. #2 Brandon Miller, #4 Brendan Pye vs. #10 Nathan Olmann

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Austin Gibson - has a decent draw and the potential to pull off an upset or two and finish on the podium

Team title race implications: Deck has been completely dominant most of the season and could score huge bonus points for Madison Central here. Bender has been a contender most of his HS career, but has a few more losses than in years past leading to his lower ranking heading into this post season. Woodford County needs him to show up with his bonus point potential to make a run at the top 3. Ohlmann is projected to finish just off the podium, but has the potential to score some surprise points for St X. Walton doesn't have as many bullets in the chamber as Union and X, but this little guy could score very important points in their chase for a top team finish. Maybe he will crack 88 on the scale this weekend and pull out a few wins.

Where 106 had no returning state placers, 113 is stacked with 5 returning placers. Deck is the odds-on favorite and would be ranked #1 at 120 had he stayed there with a win over Wallace. Miller also dropped down from 120 and looks to be favored to make a return trip to the finals at this weight. Horton and Pye had a battle in the region finals and hope to spoil the plans of the top 2. But Horton has a big match in the quarters with Bender who he beat at the Raider Rumble.

## 120 lbs.

**Favorite: Gabe Adams (10, Union Co)**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2. Cagen Wallace (12, Wayne Co)       | 14. Isaac Pledger (12, St. Xavier)       |
| 3. Preston Mattingly (11, Apollo)     | 15. Dylan Harkins (11, DeSales)          |
| 4. Zach Cowan (9, Madison Central)    | 16. Jarrett Sanders (10, Ashland Blazer) |
| 5. Bradley Miller (11, Taylor Co)     | 17. Marquelle McDaniel (11, Central)     |
| 6. Tyler Storck (12, Henry Clay)      | 18. Cayden Graham (10, Scott Co)         |
| 7. Ethan Wells (10, Christian Co)     | 19. Troy Wooten (11, Fort Knox)          |
| 8. Carson Deckard (10, Oldham Co)     | 20. Matthew Hendricks (9, Bullitt East)  |
| 9. Dylan Preston (9, Woodford Co)     | 21. Cordell Vaske (12, Boone Co)         |
| 10. Jacob Grandstaff (9, Conner)      | 22. Carter Mitchell (9, North Oldham)    |
| 11. Eli Peyton (9, McCracken County)  | 23. Michael Watts (7, Harrison Co)       |
| 12. Keaton Elliot (9, Calloway Co)    | 24. Caileb Hills (9, Meade Co)           |
| 13. Migdoel Ocasio (11, Simon Kenton) | 25. Sergio Morales (11, Newport)         |

Returning placers: Cagen Wallace 1st @ 113, Preston Mattingly 2nd @ 106, Gabe Adams 4th @ 113, Tyler Stork 6th @ 120, Carson Deckard 6th @ 106, Migdoel Ocasio 7th @ 106

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #1 Gabe Adams vs. #6 Tyler Stork, #8 Carson Deckard vs. #7 Ethan Wells.  
Quarters: #9 Dylan Preston vs. #5 Zach Cowan, #1 Gabe Adams vs. #3 Preston Mattingly, #7 Ethan Wells vs. #4 Bradley Miller, #2 Cagen Wallace vs. #10 Jacob Grandstaff

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Isaac Pledger - St Xavier always comes to the Horse Park ready to perform and the older Pledger could be one to step up and score major extra points for the team

Team title race implications: Adams is set to score big points for Union as the favorite, but should face a stiff challenge to score bonus points as he has a bear of a draw. His potential path to the finals includes #6 Storck, #3 Mattingly, and #5 Cowan. Preston is another Woodford wrestler projected to finish just outside the placement round, but could surprise us and give the team a boost. For St X, Pledger here with a chance to shine and push the team toward a championship.

This was a highly debated weight class back to early November with some bold predictions. And I quote:

"I'll go on and predict the finals at 120 will be Storck and Cagen Wallace, another fine young man whose father I actually like. If I'm wrong, I'll eat my crow. If it comes to fruition it'll be a hell of a match not to mention a real matchup."

"Storck will wrestle at 120 this season. Sorry to shake up the rankings again! But whoa 7th at 126??? Pretty sure he's beaten the majority of those kids ranked above him there if not all of them. But hey, you have your agenda! Watch for him in the finals at State. And thank you for your hard work! Let the comments begin haha"

All of the teams chasing Union County are hoping your prediction becomes a reality. This weight should have fireworks from the opening matches. Defending state champ Wallace came in as the heavy favorite, but has taken a couple losses and seen Adams and Mattingly emerge as serious challengers. Can the Lindsey Wilson recruit win the deepest weight and go out a 2-time state champion? Mattingly was a state runner-up last year and comes in undefeated. Must see match if he meets Adams in the quarters (bout 570).

## 126 lbs.

**Favorite: Tylan Tucker (12, Woodford Co)**

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|---|--|
| 2. Sam Bacon (11, Union Co)                   | 14. Ethan Futrell (9, Trigg Co)          |
| 3. Seth Lutes (10, Scott)                     | 15. Sheridan Willoughby (11, Bourbon Co) |
| 4. Blake Evans (12, Pleasure Ridge Park)      | 16. Andrew Rutledge (11, Montgomery Co)  |
| 5. Jake Insko (10, Apollo)                    | 17. Colby Dabbs (11, Cooper)             |
| 6. Dillon Burton (12, Newport)                | 18. Truman Galusha (11, Scott Co)        |
| 7. Zach Pledger (9, St. Xavier)               | 19. Cole Nance (9, Anderson Co)          |
| 8. Brennon Conrad (9, Simon Kenton)           | 20. Jabin Hite (10, Larue Co)            |
| 9. Colton Lampe (12, Fern Creek)              | 21. Hunter Butler (10, Meade Co)         |
| 10. Cauly Wallace (10, Wayne Co)              | 22. Agali Radzhapov (11, Moore)          |
| 11. Landon Lenhart (10, Trinity (Louisville)) | 23. Devon Hill (12, Perry Co Central)    |
| 12. Darian Camery (10, John Hardin)           | 24. Kody Duerk (12, Bullitt East)        |
| 13. Scotty Villums (9, Male)                  | 25. Kelby Gay (12, Danville)             |

Returning placers: Blake Evans 2nd @ 132, Tylan Tucker 3rd @ 126, Colton Lampe 5th @ 126, Sam Bacon 7th @ 120

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #1 Tylan Tucker vs. #6 Colton Lampe, #7 Dillon Burton vs. #4 Jake Insko.  
Quarters: #2 Sam Bacon vs. #4 Jake Insko, #5 Blake Evans vs. #9 Zach Pledger, #1 Tylan Tucker vs. #8 Cauly Wallace.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Jake Insko - the mystery at this weight missing much of the season due to injury, Jake could make the finals if he is healthy and ready to roll

Team title race implications: Woodford's first big point scorer as Tucker is the clear favorite. The big question is will the Bacon sizzle in Lexington? Union is counting on his top 2 points. Pledger has a good shot to make the podium and pick up valuable team points for St X.

Tucker has battled injuries for much of his HS career. He missed his sophomore post season due to a knee injury and was unable to compete for the state title he was favored to win. Last year he came back late in the season and battled his way to a 3rd place finish in a tough 126 bracket. Is this his year to finally get his title? Bacon will be tested early by another wrestler returning from injury in Jake Insko. This quarterfinal match could set the tone for how this bracket will play out. The winner will get Evans, state runner-up at 132 last year, who recently dropped down a weight. You can't count out Lutes from Scott who has been solid all year. After winning Region 6 over Burton, Lutes is looking to make the podium for the first time in his HS career.



## 132 lbs.

**Favorite: Ryan Moore (12, Walton Verona)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Gentry Deck (11, Madison Central)   | 14. Rickey Garcia (11, John Hardin)      |
| 3. Nate Wheeler (11, St. Xavier)       | 15. Layne Siebert (11, Scott)            |
| 4. Jakerion Merritt (10, Christian Co) | 16. Chas Fudold (10, South Oldham)       |
| 5. Tom Ketchen-Carter (9, Campbell Co) | 17. Tyler Hudgins (11, Harrison Co)      |
| 6. Payne Carr (9, Union Co)            | 18. Thomas Gripshover (12, Grant Co)     |
| 7. Daylon Stafford (11, Sheldon Clark) | 19. Aaron Willoughby (12, Montgomery Co) |
| 8. Dylan Martin (11, McCracken County) | 20. Payton Watson (12, Whitley Co)       |
| 9. Salim Mardis (12, Simon Kenton)     | 21. Tucker Wells (11, Bullitt East)      |
| 10. CJ Cardwell (11, Woodford Co)      | 22. Peter Mark (11, Central Hardin)      |
| 11. Bryce Moberly (10, North Oldham)   | 23. Cooper Philpot (10, North Hardin)    |
| 12. Jerry Simpson (9, Fairdale)        | 24. Isaac Aguiar (10, Trigg Co)          |
| 13. Jordan Bates (11, Boyle Co)        | 25. Eric Green (10, Pikeville)           |

Returning placers: Ryan Moore 1st @ 126, Nate Wheeler 3rd @ 120, Ricky Garcia 5th @ 106, Dylan Stafford 7th @ 113, Bryce Moberly 8th @ 106, Lane Seibert 8th @ 126

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #1 Ryan Moore vs. #10 Dylan Martin, #9 CJ Cardwell vs. Thomas Ketchen-Carter, #5 Jakerion Merritt vs. #8 Salim Mardis. Quarters: #2 Nate Wheeler vs. #6 Payne Carr, #1 Ryan Moore vs. #7 Dylan Stafford, #4 Thomas Ketchen-Carter vs. #3 Gentry Deck

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Jakerion Merritt - very nice draw and if he makes the semis will have a rematch with Deck who pulled out a close one over him at State Duals

Team title race implications: All of the major team players have a dog in this fight. Walton needs defending state champion Moore to score a ton of bonus as he has done all season. The top half of this bracket could have major team race implications as Wheeler and Carr should hit in the quarters, with the winner facing Moore in the semis. With a number of solid guys in the top quarter, will Wheeler be able to put up a bonus point or two? Madison Central is relying on a few kids to place very high and Deck is one of them at 132. But he has to get past Tom KC in the quarters and Merritt in the semis who pushed him to the brink at StateDuals. Cardwell is expected to be yet another Woodford wrestler in the blood round. He has a tough draw, but has to score important points for the team. Hopefully his dad doesn't end up in his own version of wrestle mania with Devildad while waiting for a hot dog and pepsi.

Although Wheeler does have a solid group of guys in his quarter, overall this bracket is fairly balanced with talent on top and bottom. The quarters will be entertaining at this weight. Future Cornell Big Red wrestler Moore is looking to win title #2 after handing KC his first in-state loss in the regional final. Merritt has been hot as of late, beating Carr in the regional final and losing 1-pt matches to both Wheeler and Deck at State Duals.

## 138 lbs.

**Favorite: Saul Ervin (12, Union Co)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Chase Yost (10, Woodford Co)            | 14. Brent Hudgins (11, Harrison Co)        |
| 3. Blake Roth (12, Walton Verona)          | 15. Damon Smith (12, Central)              |
| 4. Noah Davis (12, Larue Co)               | 16. Justin Smith (10, Bullitt East)        |
| 5. Jonathan Shepherd (11, Wayne Co)        | 17. Will Kenney (12, Madison Central)      |
| 6. Anthony Pierce (10, South Oldham)       | 18. Diontae Rone (11, Holmes)              |
| 7. David Connor (9, McCracken County)      | 19. Jackson Grimsley (10, Taylor Co)       |
| 8. Alejandro Mejia (10, Simon Kenton)      | 20. Jacob Anderson (12, Oldham Co)         |
| 9. Ishmael Griffie (12, Christian Co)      | 21. Noah Kirkman (10, Owensboro)           |
| 10. Mannie Murrer (11, Covington Catholic) | 22. Justin Chavez (11, Lafayette)          |
| 11. Dakota Starcher (11, Pike Co Central)  | 23. Montrielle Ware (12, Southern)         |
| 12. Gage Hignite (11, Ashland Blazer)      | 24. Lukas Brown (12, Trinity (Louisville)) |
| 13. Kaden Darbro (12, St. Xavier)          | 25. Derrick Witmer (12, Boyle Co)          |

Returning placers: Saul Ervin 1st @ 132, Chase Yost 4th @ 120, Kaden Darbro 4th @ 132, Blake Roth 5th @ 120, Noah Davis 7th @ 138

Early round matches to watch: **Round 1:** #1 Saul Ervin vs. #8 Alejandr Mejia. **Round 2:** #1 Saul Ervin vs. #10 Anthony Pierce, #9 Kaden Darbo vs. #6 David Conner, #5 Jonathon Shepard vs. #7 Ishmael Griffie.  
Quarters: #1 Saul Ervin vs. #4 Noah Davis, #6 David Conner vs. #2 Chase Yost.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Mannie Murrer - strong kid who has been hot of late

Team title race implications: The three guys up top will need to pick up some crucial team points. Ervin is looking for his 2nd straight title. Standing in his way is Walton Verona's Blake Roth. Can Roth pull off the upset and keep Walton in striking distance of Union? Should be a great match with two high caliber wrestlers. Leading the other half of the bracket is Yost from Woodford. Yost won a high school title in the 8th grade and is looking to return to the top of the podium. Yost has the luxury of the easier road to the finals. Can he take advantage of the draw and once again wrestle on the big stage in the finals? All three of these guys should put up some serious bonus points along the way. Darbro is a wild card for St X. As a returning state placer, he definitely has potential to get back on the podium, but has a weird draw with a few land mines.

For a number of years 138 has been a deep, exciting weight. While I don't think this year's crop of competitors is as talented top to bottom as some of the past years, this group of 138 pounders is wide open and although a little less consistent there are any number of wrestlers who I can see finishing in the 5-8 spots; possibly even kids down in the #20 range.

## 145 lbs.

**Favorite: Trent Johnson (12, John Hardin)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2. Jakob McClintic (11, Oldham Co)       | 14. Nathan Begley (11, Johnson Central) |
| 3. Nathaniel Lawrence (10, Franklin Co)  | 15. Griffin Hall (11, Taylor Co)        |
| 4. Zach Holub (12, Cooper)               | 16. Zach Higdon (10, Fairdale)          |
| 5. Alex Rivera (11, Moore)               | 17. Dylan Lewis (11, Harrison Co)       |
| 6. Ryan McManus (12, Madison Central)    | 18. Jayden Watson (10, Whitley Co)      |
| 7. Clay Fitzhugh (12, St. Xavier)        | 19. Marshall Royce (11, North Oldham)   |
| 8. Ronan Wyatt (11, Woodford Co)         | 20. Collin Morris (12, Meade Co)        |
| 9. Tristen Spaulding (10, Walton Verona) | 21. James Nash (11, Bullitt East)       |
| 10. Blake Day (12, Ashland Blazer)       | 22. Cameron Isaacs (11, Seneca)         |
| 11. Neil Aldridge (10, Christian Co)     | 23. Rictor Morgan (10, Simon Kenton)    |
| 12. Trevor Pogue (10, Union Co)          | 24. Jarod Phillips (11, Wayne Co)       |
| 13. Kyle Mardis (11, Newport)            | 25. Keldon Tilley (11, Bardstown)       |

Returning placers: Trent Johnson 3rd @ 138, Alex Rivera 5th @ 132, Zach Holub 5th @ 138, Tristan Spaulding 8th @ 113

Early round matches to watch: **Round 1:** #8 Ronan Wyatt vs. #9 Tristan Spaulding. **Round 2:** #10 Blake Day vs. #3 Jakob McClintic. Quarters: #5 Clay Fitzhugh vs. #4 Zach Holub, #2 Nathaniel Lawrence vs. #1 Trent Johnson, #3 Jakob McClintic vs. #7 Ryan McManus, #8 Ronan Wyatt vs. #6 Alex Rivera

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Tristan Spaulding - has lost a couple nail-biters to kids ranked just above him, if he can reverse one or two of those he could climb the podium

Team title race implications: Fitzhugh of St. X will need to pick up some points to keep his team in the race. As mentioned above, Spaulding of Walton Verona will need a couple wins over guys he has lost to this year to make the podium and to help his team. Pogue, just like Fitzhugh and Spaulding, also appears to be in that tough blood round battleground. This weight could provide a swing in team points if things get squirrely here.

Trent Johnson finally wins his title. Everyone remembers that Johnson was the favorite @ 145 last year. Then he watched an old VHS tape of Marty's called Vision Quest and decided he would drop down and go after Brian Shoot (Sheffer). It did not end the way he wanted, but I think it made a lasting impression on the state. This year will be a different story. Johnson has been unstoppable this year and has his college plans all wrapped up. Coming in behind Johnson is a bunch of quality wrestlers fighting for 2nd place in our opinion. McClintic is the front runner due to the fact Lawrence will meet Trent in the quarters.

## 152 lbs.

**Favorite: Zane Brown (11, Male)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Keaon Taylor (12, Doss)             | 14. Stephen Little (8, Union Co)           |
| 3. Kevin Vasquez (12, Lafayette)       | 15. Brandon Gibson (9, Walton Verona)      |
| 4. Blake Gamble (12, Johnson Central)  | 16. Renzie Costello (11, Perry Co Central) |
| 5. Isaiah Newberry (11, Moore)         | 17. Seth Slayton (9, Caldwell Co)          |
| 6. Drevon Jones (12, Newport)          | 18. Cameron Bixler (11, Franklin Co)       |
| 7. Dalton Bell (12, Larue Co)          | 19. Damien Calderon (11, Oldham Co)        |
| 8. Garron Moody (12, Danville)         | 20. Josh Geiser (12, Simon Kenton)         |
| 9. Wyatt Andreoni (11, Woodford Co)    | 21. Nathan Zinser (10, Scott)              |
| 10. Jimmy Kraeszig (11, St. Xavier)    | 22. Logan Bertrand (12, Madison Southern)  |
| 11. Zlatko Skulijan (10, Hopkinsville) | 23. Cole Wilson (11, Meade Co)             |
| 12. Chase Fink (10, Anderson Co)       | 24. Skyler Wells (11, Harrison Co)         |
| 13. Griffin Dulak (12, John Hardin)    | 25. Issiah Isaac (12, Boyle Co)            |

Returning placers: Zane Brown 1st @ 152, Blake Gamble 4th @ 145, Kevin Vasquez 6th @ 145, Dalton Bell 6th @ 160, Drevon Jones 7th @ 145, Keyon Taylor 7th @ 152

Early round matches to watch: **Round 1:** #10 James Kraeszig vs. #9 Garron Moody. **Round 2:** #5 Isiah Newberry vs. #8 Wyatt Andreoni. Quarters: #9 Garron Moody vs. #6 Drevon Jones, #4 Keaon Taylor vs. #5 Isiah Newberry, #2 Kevin Vasquez vs. #3 Blake Gamble, #7 Dalton bell vs. #1 Zane Brown

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Drevon Jones - looking solid with a nice draw that could land him in the finals

Team title race implications: Team points for the top five will be light in this weight. Andreoni of Woodford and Kraeszig of X are projected slightly outside of the top 8. Can they win a few matches and gain some valuable team points? Young guys Little and Gibson also have some upside that could impact the team race.

Zane Brown will be looking to add another finals appearance to his resume (already has 3). Brown has been the heavy favorite the entire year, even coming off surgery this summer. Talk about "unbalanced bracket". #2 Vasquez will face #3 Gamble early in the quarters. Both guys are state placers looking to finish higher on the podium. The winner will look to knock off Brown in the semis.

## 160 lbs.

**Favorite: Derrick Smallwood (12, John Hardin)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Konner Kraeszig (12, St. Xavier)    | 14. Cody Foster (10, Ryle)                 |
| 3. Max Powell (12, Fairdale)           | 15. Myles Harris (11, Bates Creek)         |
| 4. Clayton Boyd (11, Conner)           | 16. Jon Gaudin (11, Trinity (Louisville))  |
| 5. Lucas Carrillo (12, Oldham Co)      | 17. Ron Shackelford (10, Campbell Co)      |
| 6. Tristan Garcia (12, Male)           | 18. Carter Riley (10, DeSales)             |
| 7. Colin Stevens (10, Trigg Co)        | 19. Cameron Coleman (10, Christian Co)     |
| 8. Brent Burke (12, Sheldon Clark)     | 20. Klemmer Nicodemus (10, Ohio Co)        |
| 9. Jack Fuller (11, Apollo)            | 21. Graham Davis (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 10. Daulton Mayer (10, Walton Verona)  | 22. Kurtis Karr (9, Wayne Co)              |
| 11. Daniel Baker (12, Madison Central) | 23. Chris Allen (12, Moore)                |
| 12. Mason Hall (11, South Oldham)      | 24. Miles Nelson (11, North Hardin)        |
| 13. Triston Brooks (10, Woodford Co)   | 25. Tyjer Williams (12, Valley)            |

Returning placers: Konner Kraeszig 2nd @ 138, Colin Stevens 6th @ 152, Lucas Carrillo 7th @ 160, Tristan Garcia 8th @ 145

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #3 Max Powell vs. #10 Triston Brooks, #6 Tristin Garcia vs. #8 Brent Burke.  
Quarters: #2 Konner Kraeszig vs. #4 Lucas Carrillo, #1 Derrick Smallwood vs. #7 Colin Stevens, #3 Max Powell vs. #8 Brent Burke

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Brent Burke - big strong kid with a less than favorable draw, but at 42-0 we think he will be able to battle through the bracket

Team title race implications: St. X is counting on Kraeszig to make the finals to add some serious points to the team's totals. Walton Verona's hopes are riding on a highly improved wrestler Daulton Mayer. Can he pull off a couple upsets and find his way to the podium? Baker and Brooks are in the same boat and have the chance to impact the race in a positive way.

This bracket was almost seeded perfectly. We say almost, considering #2 Kraeszig will see #4 Carrillo in the quarters. The winner should run into Boyd from Conner. Boyd will be looking to place at the big show for the first time. Lindsey Wilson Recruit Derrick Smallwood will be looking for his first state title. After missing his sophomore season he fell short last year in a brutal draw. We feel he is good to go this time around. Smallwood has been hammering the competition all year and will look to continue that in Lexington. Hopefully Smallwood breaks out the vintage robe if he makes it to the face-off for the finals. Only time will tell but, we feel good about this pick.

## 170 lbs.

**Favorite: Mason Smith (12, Walton Verona)**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 2. Micah Ervin (10, Union Co)         | 14. Levid Rodriguez (8, Johnson Central)  |
| 3. Michael Walker (12, Whitley Co)    | 15. Trenton Cantlon (10, DeSales)         |
| 4. Jared Kelsay (11, Scott)           | 16. Rowdy Kinser (12, Sheldon Clark)      |
| 5. Cameron Ward (12, St. Xavier)      | 17. Dymond Harris (12, Owensboro)         |
| 6. Jack Lucas (11, Male)              | 18. Ben Lanham (10, Nelson Co)            |
| 7. Eric Bloh (12, Danville)           | 19. Hunter Bradley (9, McCracken County)  |
| 8. Ethan Tomerlin (9, Fort Campbell)  | 20. Jake Stegman (12, Covington Catholic) |
| 9. Jacob Bratcher (12, Dupont Manual) | 21. John Diehl (12, West Jessamine)       |
| 10. Isaac Hale (12, Oldham Co)        | 22. Nigel Lewis (12, Madison Southern)    |
| 11. Thomas Boone (12, Larue Co)       | 23. Brandon Richmond (9, Campbell Co)     |
| 12. Kolby Morris (12, Hopkinsville)   | 24. Darrian Akers (11, Pikeville)         |
| 13. Tony Ornelas (9, Woodford Co)     | 25. Joe Taylor (11, Anderson Co)          |

Returning placers: Cameron Ward 2nd @ 160, Mason Smith 3rd @ 160, Micah Ervin 3rd @ 152, Jacob Bratcher 4th @ 170

Early round matches to watch: **Round 1:** #7 Jacob Bratcher vs. #10 Ethan Tomerlin. **Round 2:** #4 Jared Kelsay vs. #5 Cameron Ward, #1 Mason Smith vs. #6 Jack Lucas. Quarters: #9 Eric Bloh vs. #4 Jared Kelsay, #9 Isaiah Hale vs. #2 Micah Ervin, #3 Michael Walker vs. #7 Jacob Bratcher

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Jacob Bratcher - the ax murderer looks to return to the podium in a very top heavy weight

Team title race implications: 170 will have a big impact on the St. X, Walton Verona, and Union team race. Leading the way is the West Point recruit Mason Smith. Walton Verona is depending on Smith to put up some big bonus points. Standing in the way will be Union County's Micah Ervin and Cameron Ward. Smith owns wins over both this year and we are sure Ervin and Ward will be looking to even the score. All 3 wrestlers will need to accumulate lots of bonus points to help their teams.

Smith has finished in the top 4 for the last 4 state tournaments. Ervin has been a contender for a few years. Ward is a returning runner-up. A lot of firepower there. Although Walker of Whitley County doesn't have those accolades, he comes in with a 40-1 record looking for a state title run for himself. Jacob Bratcher is another guy we should keep an eye on. Bratcher is a returning state placer who is looking to bounce back from regions. Should be a fun bracket to watch.

## 182 lbs.

**Favorite: Braden Mulcahy (11, Walton Verona)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2. Dylan Gray (12, Caldwell Co)         | 14. Chris Dunagan (11, Wayne Co)              |
| 3. Diion Leavell (12, Christian Co)     | 15. William Elliott (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 4. Dakota Santiago (12, Taylor Co)      | 16. Hunter Lattin (10, Meade Co)              |
| 5. Chase Blanton (11, Harrison Co)      | 17. Isaac Johnson (12, Larue Co)              |
| 6. Zach Chandler (11, Male)             | 18. Emmanuel Merkel (11, Conner)              |
| 7. Don Harris (12, Danville)            | 19. Evan Williams (0, North Oldham)           |
| 8. Daylan Bailey (12, Cooper)           | 20. Chandler Miller (10, DeSales)             |
| 9. Jackson Deckard (11, Oldham Co)      | 21. Luis Ceron (12, Moore)                    |
| 10. Andrew Marchal (11, Atherton)       | 22. Ben Rush (9, Boyle Co)                    |
| 11. Anthony Garner (12, Valley)         | 23. Trevor Tilley (12, McCracken County)      |
| 12. Devin Johnson (10, Johnson Central) | 24. Ethan Glenn (12, Spencer County)          |
| 13. Branson Smith (9, Sheldon Clark)    | 25. Randall West (11, Belfry)                 |

Returning placers: Diion Leavell 3rd @ 170, Chase Blanton 4th @ 182, Brayden Mulcahy 5th @ 170, Dylan Gray 5th @ 160

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #3 Diion Leavell vs. #7 Jackson Deckard, #6 Don Harris vs. #8 Daylan Bailey, #4 Dakota Santiago vs. #10 Andrew Marchal. Quarters: #1 Brayden Mulcahy vs. Diion Leavell, #6 Don Harris vs. #5 Chase Blanton, #4 Dakota Santiago vs. #2 Dylan Gray

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Zach Chandler - fairly good draw, could help propel Male into the top 10 of the team race

Team title race implications: 2 weights in a row that Walton Verona will be depending on points to keep the title race close. #1 Braden Mulcahy leads the way and has been on fire this season and looks to win his first state title. Mulcahy will have to get past Christian County's Leavell early in the quarters. This should be a very exciting match that you won't want to miss.

#2 Dylan Gray is hoping to end his high school career with his first state title. There has been much debate about who the #1 is at 182 and this weekend will answer those questions. Blanton of Harrison County started the season at the top of the rankings, but has a tough road with Harris in the quarters and Gray in the semis. All 4 of these wrestlers are high returning state placers but, there can only be one. Who will it be?

## 195 lbs.

**Favorite: Mathias Ervin (10, Union Co)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2. Sam Jenkins (11, North Oldham)          | 14. Allen Anderson (11, Moore)          |
| 3. Niko Bussell (10, Christian Co)         | 15. Kaylon Luster (12, Fort Knox)       |
| 4. Benjamin Deprest (11, St. Xavier)       | 16. William Long (12, Perry Co Central) |
| 5. Matthew Horn (11, Johnson Central)      | 17. Gerald Seeney (12, Scott)           |
| 6. Keegan Cundiff (12, Dixie Heights)      | 18. Tyler Little (12, Scott Co)         |
| 7. Andrew Vasquez (12, Oldham Co)          | 19. Logan Deasel (10, McCracken County) |
| 8. Kadin Kulmer (11, Trinity (Louisville)) | 20. Jacob Wilkerson (12, Pikeville)     |
| 9. Cody Lonkard (12, Ryle)                 | 21. Brandon Vera (11, Bryan Station)    |
| 10. Colby Stratman (11, DeSales)           | 22. Josh Valentine (11, Central Hardin) |
| 11. Quion Lee (11, Doss)                   | 23. Deshawn Stratton (12, Western)      |
| 12. Peyton Martin (12, Male)               | 24. Dominique Hope (11, John Hardin)    |
| 13. Zade Hawkins (12, Madison Central)     | 25. Michael Leicht (9, Campbell Co)     |

Returning placers: Kadin Kulmer 3rd @ 195, Mathias Ervin 6th @ 170, Matt Horn 6th @ 182, Sam Jenkins 7th @ 170, Niko Bussell 8th @ 182

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #10 Zade Hawkins vs. #3 Niko Bussell, #5 Benjamin Deprest vs. #2 Sam Jenkins, #1 Mathias Ervin vs. #9 Cody Lonkard, #7 Kadin Kulmer vs. #6 Andrew Vasquez.

Quarters: #3 Niko Bussell vs. #2 Sam Jenkins, #6 Andrew Vasquez vs. #4 Matthew Horn.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Kadin Kulmer - a returning high placer who got off to a slow start this season due to a deep football run; he could totally shake up this bracket

Team title race implications: Another bracket deciding the order of the team title race. Mathias Ervin has been the #1 since early in the season when he won the Raider Rumble over Kulmer. Can he get past Horn of Johnson Central and win another "Ervin State Title". Deprest health will be a huge issue here.

Sam Jenkins of North Oldham has recently moved to #2 and will be looking to knock off Ervin in the finals. Deprest of St. X had an injury default at regionals vs. Kulmer of Trinity. Will Deprest be 100% and ready to make a run for his team. I think this might be the most wide open weight, not for lack of talent, but lack of a dominant wrestler who can run away from the field.



## 220 lbs.

**Favorite: Damorean Travis (12, Moore)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2. Bryan Pratt (11, Meade Co)            | 14. Jack Hill (12, Woodford Co)               |
| 3. Alex Horn (11, Johnson Central)       | 15. Joseph Fisher (10, Letcher Co Central)    |
| 4. Ray Karl Irving (12, Henry Clay)      | 16. Ian Hughes (9, Simon Kenton)              |
| 5. RJ Boies (11, Anderson Co)            | 17. Tyler Kassinger (12, South Oldham)        |
| 6. Nathan Prosser (12, McCreary Central) | 18. Austin Smith (12, Bullitt East)           |
| 7. Daniel Kimble (12, Oldham Co)         | 19. Denis Diemer (12, St. Xavier)             |
| 8. Patrick Dumire (11, Valley)           | 20. Tyler Edwards (11, Southern)              |
| 9. Ross Hicks (12, Union Co)             | 21. Briar Roberts (11, Trinity (Whitesville)) |
| 10. Chandler Watkins (11, Ryle)          | 22. Spencer Updike (11, Danville)             |
| 11. Nathan Watson (11, Scott)            | 23. Mason Boggs (12, Lafayette)               |
| 12. Justin Penick (12, Dixie Heights)    | 24. Dylan Halsel (12, North Hardin)           |
| 13. Grover Russell (12, Central)         | 25. Dylan Marlow (12, Ohio Co)                |

Returning placers: Bryan Pratt 1st @ 220, Alex Horn 3rd @ 220, Ray Karl Irving 5th @ 195, Daniel Kimbell 7th @ 195

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #8 Ross Hicks vs. #6 RJ Boies, #7 Nathan Prosser vs. #10 Chandler Watkins.  
Quarters: #4 Ray Karl Irving vs. #3 Alex Horn, #5 Daniel Kimbell vs. #1 Demoreon Travis, #6 RJ Boies vs. #9 Patrick Dumire, #2 Bryan Pratt vs. #7 Nathan Prosser.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Chandler Watkins - not sure any spot is safe after the top 4, Ryle big guy might steal a spot on the podium

Team title race implications: Union, Woodford, and X all have kids projected to just miss the podium. Will Hicks, Hill, or Diemer be able to pull off an upset or two and take home some hardware and possibly give their team an edge?

It's hard to imagine that defending state champion Bryan Pratt, who is 41-1, is not the favorite. But that is just how good Travis has been. The move to Moore has been good for him as he has performed like a champ all season. But there are a couple tough competitors who likely have plans to take home a title themselves. Horn and Irving have been near the top of the podium before and whoever comes out of that quarter, will earn that spot in the semis.

## 285 lbs.

**Favorite: Kairus Washington (12, Dixie Heights)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2. Byron Pierce (11, Johnson Central)         | 14. Tate Morris (11, Taylor Co)          |
| 3. Gavin Hunt (12, Pike Co Central)           | 15. Noah Hunter (12, Scott)              |
| 4. Christian Denney (11, Wayne Co)            | 16. Tyler Lawson (12, Whitley Co)        |
| 5. Payton Snyder (12, Union Co)               | 17. Cody Melton (11, Moore)              |
| 6. Tucker Shelton (10, Larue Co)              | 18. Esmond Morris (11, McCracken County) |
| 7. Dejuan Watkins (10, DeSales)               | 19. Jacob McDowell (12, Daviess Co)      |
| 8. Bradyn Robertson (12, Central)             | 20. Max Harris (11, Madison Southern)    |
| 9. Jalen Benson (11, Franklin Co)             | 21. Tim Rolf (11, Campbell Co)           |
| 10. Zeph Ragsdale (12, Fern Creek)            | 22. JT Daniels (10, Newport)             |
| 11. Stephen Herron (11, Trinity (Louisville)) | 23. Brandon Pruitt (11, Pikeville)       |
| 12. Wyatt Jones (11, Male)                    | 24. Bartum Mentee (12, Iroquois)         |
| 13. Alex Roberts (12, Oldham Co)              | 25. Nate Humphrey (12, Owensboro)        |

Returning placers: Kairus Washington 2nd @ 285, Byron Pierce 4th @ 285, Christian Denny 5th @ 285, Payton Snyder 8th @ 285.

Early round matches to watch: **Round 2:** #4 Payton Snyder vs. #10 Zeph Ragsdale, #1 Kairus Washington vs. #3 Gavin Hunt, #8 Alex Roberts vs. #5 Christian Denny. Quarters: #1 Kairus Washington vs. #5 Christian Denny, #9 Dejuan Watkins vs. #2 Byron Pierce, #6 Tucker Shelton vs. #7 Jalen Benson.

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Noah Hunter - you know anything can happen at heavy, but he looked tough at region and if he is confident could have the draw to surprise a lot of people

Team title race implications: Union County is the only team in the race with a point scorer here. Snyder needs to come through and make the podium to give his team that nice cushion.

Washington was one break dancing move from a state title last year in Lexington. The big guy is 46-0 and it is hard to see him letting it slip through his hands this time around. That would add another heavyweight title to the Dixie Heights trophy case along with Brandon Johnson in recent years. It's hard to predict how this bracket will play out, but I'm hearing a lot of interest in Benson from Franklin County. We always get some surprises at heavyweight.

## Team Champions

**Favorite: Union Co (5 finalists, 3 champs, 7 total placers)**

2. Walton Verona	(4 finalists, 3 champs, 5 placers)	14. Larue Co	(4 placers)
3. St. Xavier	(1 finalists, 0 champs, 7 placers)	15. Taylor Co	(1 finalist, 3 placers)
4. Madison Central	(2 finalists, 1 champ, 5 placers)	16. Apollo	(3 placers)
5. Woodford Co	(2 finalists, 1 champ, 4 placers)	17. Ryle	(2 placers)
6. Christian Co	(0 finalists, 0 champs, 5 placers)	18. Conner	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 2 placers)
7. Johnson Central	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 4 placers)	19. Dixie Heights	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 2 placers)
8. Oldham Co	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 5 placers)	20. Caldwell Co	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 2 placers)
9. Male	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 4 placers)	21. McCracken County	(2 placers)
10. John Hardin	(2 finalists, 2 champs, 2 placers)	22. Simon Kenton	(2 placers)
11. Wayne Co	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 3 placers)	23. Danville	(3 placers)
12. Scott	(3 placers)	24. North Oldham	(1 finalist, 1 placer)
13. Moore	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 2 placers)	25. DeSales	(1 placer)

Union County is poised to win their third straight state championship. While I don't see them as a runaway train, I do think they have a lead on Walton and St Xavier. Walton coming out of a very deep and tough Region 6 doesn't have as many kids in the tournament as the other major players, but they do have some hammers who will score huge points. St X always peaks well for this week, but injuries to Marrett and possibly Deprest could hinder their run at the Braves and Bearcats. Very nice to see some new faces in Madison Central and Christian County challenging for a team trophy. Great for the sport for up and coming teams to battle the big boys on the big stage. Both of these teams have some horses that could make things interesting if anyone falters for the top 3. No surprise to see Woodford County in the top 5; they are always right there even in a year where they have flown under the radar. Their lower half is as good as anyone, but can their upper weights score enough to get them a trophy or even challenge the top 3?