

2020 Ranger Report

Kentucky High School State Wrestling Championship Preview

Man, it really seems like this season went by quickly. I'm not sure if I am just getting old or if the earth is spinning faster; likely I am just getting old. Either way, here we are at the end of another great wrestling season. Who knows how many more of these I will follow this closely as my years with a kid on the mat is drawing closer and closer to an end. It was sad to watch my oldest finish his high school time, yes even winning a couple titles I would say it was sad. Because as I've heard many a wise coach explain, it's all about the journey and not the destination. The process of putting everything we have into the work of getting better at this great sport is an amazing journey. To see my kid and all the kids I have worked with put their blood, sweat, and tears into the process is impossible to put into words. Yes, it all feels like it was worth it when they win titles and reach goals, but even when they fall short you can know it was worth it. The time we spend (and have spent) together and the great memories are invaluable. That is how even winning a title as a senior can be a sad moment when dad realizes that is the last time he will sit in his son's corner. And you can be extremely proud and happy when a loss comes in the last seconds of a crazy scramble when dad knows he gave his all and will put everything he has into getting better from that experience. Ok, enough Dutch reminiscing moments before I tear up. I will keep this short and sweet so I can get it posted today(Thursday).

This season started with a great preseason watching our KY boys show how tough we are at the IHPO event. Every year we prove we can compete up there in Fort Wayne. I encourage everyone to make that trip and wrestle in one of the toughest preseason events in the country and it is only a few hrs away for a lot of us. Then we had a great turnout for the All Star Classic held at Scott High School. For the first time I didn't have to travel far for this event and the crowd showed up along with a number of folks who purchased the trackcast. That support along with the tremendous support of Joe Burroughs (No-Ox and FCA Wrestling), Isaac Knable (Invicta Wrestling), Barbarian Apparel, Kentucky Extreme (my club), and KY USA wrestling (Jon Carr) made the event a huge success this year. That success will be shared as the state finalists will again receive a congratulatory wrestling bag for their accomplishments. Also a big thanks to Coach Graven and the Scott High School wrestling crew for doing a great job hosting.

While the season has gone by way too fast, the number of injuries has seemed to be way too many for such a quick season. A few guys have made it back on the mat for the post season while a number of others did not and we have already heard about a couple injuries shuffling some kids out of state after regionals. Hope and pray for quick and full recoveries for everyone.

Last thing I will say here is remember this report is a prediction on how the brackets will play out based on the final rankings. As much as I may want to put some subjectivity into my picks, it is very systematic. But it all comes down to the kids performing on the mat. When they toe the line and that whistle blows these rankings and predictions don't mean a thing. But they are darn fun to argue about.

One last thing. For the first time ever, Ky USA wrestling and Jon Carr were able to get this thing live streamed on trackwrestling. Spread the word. Anyone who can't make it to Lexington to watch it live please pay the \$20 and watch the event. Let's show the KHSAA how much we love this sport by supporting it.

Best of luck to everyone this weekend. Hope for safe travels and safe competition. Let's show up this weekend and cheer these hard working young men and women on.

- Ranger

Report Audit

How the predicted individual champions fared?

	<u>13 Year Average</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Won title	9.4	67.0%
Finished 2 nd	1.9	13.7%
Finished 3 rd	1.7	12.1%
Finished 4 th	0.2	1.1%
<u>*Lower than 4th</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>6.0%</u>
TOTAL	14	100%

*total of 11 predicted champs have finished outside the top 4 in the last 12 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, 2018 - Braden Mulcahy Walton-Verona 182 DNP, 2019 - Chase Yost Woodford Co 132 6th, Noah Duke Ryle 182 5th)

Who won the individual state title?

	<u>13 Year Average</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Ranked 1 st	9.4	67.0%
Ranked 2 nd	2.4	17.0%
Ranked 3 rd	0.7	4.9%
Ranked 4 th	0.6	4.4%
<u>*Lower than 4th</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>6.6%</u>
TOTAL	14	100%

*total of 12 individuals won the state title who were predicted to finish outside the top 4 in the last 13 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 7th, 2017 - David Woods Calloway Co 195 13th, Bryan Pratt Meade Co 220 9th, 2019 - Dalton Russellburg Union Co 152 8th, Sam Jenkins North Oldham 182 8th)

Who placed?

	<u>13 Year Average</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Predicted Top 8	5.9	74.1%
Predicted 9 th - 12 th	1.1	14.4%
Predicted 13 th -16 th	0.5	6.1%
<u>Predicted below 16th</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>5.4%</u>
TOTAL	8	100%

How the predicted team champions fared and who placed Top 5?

2007

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

2008

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

2009

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

2010

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

2011

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

2012

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

2013

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

2014

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

2015

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

*St. Xavier finished 8th

2016

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

*North Oldham finished 6th, Campbell Co finished 7th

2017

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

2018

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

*Walton-Verona finished 6th, Madison Central finished 8th

2019

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>
Predicted	Union Co	Johnson Central	Christian Co*	St. Xavier	Madison Central
Actual	Union Co	Johnson Central	St. Xavier	Madison Central	Scott

*Christian Co finished 6th

106 lbs.

Favorite: Spencer Moore (11, Walton Verona)

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|--|---|
| 2. Adam Williams (11, Johnson Central) | 14. Caleb Jarvis (9, Fairdale) |
| 3. Colin Tucker (10, Wayne Co) | 15. Tyler Lattin (8, Meade Co) |
| 4. Leland Reeves (8, Taylor Co) | 16. Aiden Butler (8, Scott Co) |
| 5. Olivia Messerly (9, Ryle) | 17. Mason Orth (9, Campbell Co) |
| 6. Miller Brown (7, Oldham Co) | 18. Xavier Garcia (9, Fort Knox) |
| 7. Aiden Zinser (9, Scott) | 19. Dalen Lesshafft (10, DeSales) |
| 8. Amari Hardin (9, John Hardin) | 20. Clayton Shaddix (7, Great Crossing) |
| 9. Brandon Bruner (11, Bryan Station) | 21. Hayden Canady (8, Perry Co Central) |
| 10. Korrey Mattingly (9, Male) | 22. Moses Navaro (9, McCreary Central) |
| 11. JaRi Campbell (9, Christian Co) | 23. Amelia Foltz (11, Madison Southern) |
| 12. Trushawn Matt (9, Hopkinsville) | 24. Brody McKune (7, Moore) |
| 13. Collin Teutsch (9, Caldwell Co) | 25. Cole Harrod (9, Anderson Co) |

Returning placers: Spencer Moore 2nd @ 106

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #7 Brown v. #9 Bruner, #6 Messerly v. #10 Teusch, #4 Williams v. #5 Zinser, Quarters: #1 Moore v. #3 Reeves, #7 Brown v. #6 Messerly, #4 Williams v. #8 Hardin

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Aiden Zinser has been tough since making the drop to 106 and has a favorable draw to make a deep run

Team title race implications: The only weight with no Union County representative. If Williams can make a deep run to the finals that will be big points for Johnson Central in what will be a tight battle for 2nd. Christian County will score here as well with Campbell, but not sure where. Ryle could make a push for the top 3 if Messerly makes that finals run.

106 is always a fun weight class to follow. We always have a few hammers at this weight and a bunch of kids looking to make a name for themselves. At 43-0 Moore is ranked #4 in the country by Flowrestling and comes to the horse park as the prohibitive favorite, but the top heavy bracket will likely put him against #3 Reeves in the quarters and #2 Tucker in the semis before he gets another shot at that state title that eluded him last year. Tucker only has 1 loss on the season (out of state) and will be heavily favored to make the semis. Reeves is undefeated with a win over Messerly, but has a tough road. I see the bottom side of this bracket as wide open. Brown has been solid this year, but with #4 through #10 on the bottom anything could happen. As I mention above, I think that Zinser-Williams match in round 2 will be huge for day 2.

113 lbs.

Favorite: Trayce Eckman (10, Union Co)

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|---|---|
| 2. Gage Fowler (11, Christian Co) | 14. Hunter Sproles (10, Cooper) |
| 3. Jonathan Gilbert (9, Madison Central) | 15. Andres Quintana (9, Owensboro) |
| 4. George Feree (9, Trinity (Louisville)) | 16. Robert McKinney (12, North Hardin) |
| 5. Matthew Meyer (11, St. Xavier) | 17. Mason Davis (10, Valley) |
| 6. July Soe (12, Iroquois) | 18. David Griffith (11, Meade Co) |
| 7. Morgan Sallee (12, Danville) | 19. Corey Westover (11, Larue Co) |
| 8. Riley Johnson (10, Caldwell Co) | 20. CeJay Vaske (12, Boone Co) |
| 9. Kellen Dick (11, Wayne Co) | 21. Mason Schweitzer (9, Walton Verona) |
| 10. Yahir Menchaca (11, Harrison Co) | 22. Patrick Meek (10, Johnson Central) |
| 11. Rowdy Benner (8, Great Crossing) | 23. Jeremiah Baird (10, McCreary Central) |
| 12. Aiden Roe (10, Central) | 24. Brock Messer (8, Martin County) |
| 13. Joey Sander (10, Ryle) | 25. Jack James (8, Paducah Tilghman) |

Returning placers: Trayce Eckman 3rd @ 106, Gage Fowler 4th @ 113, Matthew Meyer 4th @ 106, Jonathan Gilbert 5th @ 106, Morgan Sallee 8th @ 113, Riley Johnson 8th @ 106

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #4 Fowler v. #9 Menchaca, #6 Soe v. #8 Dick, #10 Sander v. #5 Meyer, #7 Sallee v. #1 Eckman. Quarters: #3 Gilber v. #4 Feree, #5 Meyer v. #1 Eckman

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Joey Sander has been battle tested with that Ryle schedule and has passed many of those tests. He has a brutal draw, but he will be a very tough out

Team title race implications: Big points for the top 2 teams here with Eckman and Fowler. Just like 106 Ryle has a chance to make up ground on Johnson Central and Christian County if Sander steps up big. Meek does have a draw that could allow him to score some crucial points for JC.

113 has 6 returning state placers in the bracket; 3 of them are in the bottom quarter. Eckman could face a state placer in round 2 (Sallee), quarters (Meyer), and the final (Fowler). But similar to Sander and Ryle, Union County is battle tested and Eckman has been rock solid all year. Gilbert comes into state at 25-0 and has to go through a state placer in round 2 as well in Johnson. #2 Fowler doesn't have a state placer in round 2, just 31-2 Menchaca. This weight should be exciting starting on Friday afternoon.

120 lbs.

Favorite: Cole Thomas (10, Ryle)

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|---|---|
| 2. Isaac Thornton (10, Grant Co) | 14. Conner Sexton (12, Wayne Co) |
| 3. Dalton Lawson (12, Johnson Central) | 15. Parker McKee (11, McCracken County) |
| 4. Braedon Herron (9, North Hardin) | 16. Hunter Isaacs (9, Walton Verona) |
| 5. Austin Hedges (12, Trinity (Louisville)) | 17. Nathan Ainslie (12, Henry Clay) |
| 6. Jason Holden (10, Campbell Co) | 18. Coty Harris (9, Caldwell Co) |
| 7. Noah Kirkman (12, Owensboro) | 19. Easton Givens (12, Ohio Co) |
| 8. Donovan Evans (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) | 20. Jeremiah Thomas (10, Conner) |
| 9. Nolan Banfield (9, Montgomery Co) | 21. John Paisley (8, South Oldham) |
| 10. Gabe Fortier (9, Larue Co) | 22. Micah Chappell (11, Danville) |
| 11. Gavin Ricketts (9, Union Co) | 23. Cole Cecil (9, Bullitt East) |
| 12. Jude Powell (9, Fairdale) | 24. Eli Mattingly-Neal (11, St. Xavier) |
| 13. Charlie Tucker (10, John Hardin) | 25. Isaac Fain (10, Lafayette) |

Returning placers: Cole Thomas 1st @ 106, Isaac Thornton 2nd @ 113, Dalton Lawson 3rd @ 113, Nolan Banfield 7th @ 106

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #7 Banfield v. #4 Herron, #9 Fortier v. #2 Thornton, #8 Kirkman v. #3 Lawson. Quarters: #5 Hedges v. #1 Thomas, #10 Ricketts v. #4 Herron, #6 Holden v. #3 Lawson

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Nolan Banfield placed at 106 and although the bracket doesn't favor him, I think he will find his way onto the podium

Team title race implications: Thomas has scored a lot of bonus points this season and Ryle will need them to keep pace with the top 3. Lawson will represent big points for Johnson Central at 120 as Christian County does not have a wrestler here.

This is one of the most balanced brackets in the event; half of the top 10 on the top, half on the bottom. Returning state champion Thomas is a solid favorite here and looking to keep on pace to win 4 titles. He should be able to put up some bonus points on the top half of the bracket. On the bottom you have returning state runner-up from 113 Thornton and returning 3rd from 113 Lawson. These two didn't meet last year, so I'm looking forward to this showdown. We don't see a lot of Johnson Central during the season, but Thornton had a huge win over #1 at 126 Kinley, so I will favor him to come out of the lower half of the bracket and face Thomas.

126 lbs.

Favorite: Jeffrey Kinley (10, Madison Central)

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| 2. Thomas Hoppes (11, Larue Co) | 14. Logan Wells (9, Bullitt East) |
| 3. Devon Herron (10, North Hardin) | 15. Jamison Smith (10, Ryle) |
| 4. Dylan Walls (10, Caldwell Co) | 16. Leshawn Simmons (12, Holmes) |
| 5. Kaiji Fuji (9, Central Hardin) | 17. Chris Begley (9, Madison Southern) |
| 6. Virgil Garcia (12, Male) | 18. Dakota Karr (9, Wayne Co) |
| 7. Ethan Wells (12, Christian Co) | 19. Luke Oliveros (9, South Oldham) |
| 8. Ruben Martinez (12, McCreary Central) | 20. Hunter Creech (10, Simon Kenton) |
| 9. Jonah Bowers (10, Campbell Co) | 21. Gunnar Arnold (9, Ohio Co) |
| 10. Lee Florexille (11, Central) | 22. Jacob Gravette (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 11. Jayden Webb (12, Johnson Central) | 23. Dominic Hinton (12, West Carter) |
| 12. Devin Armstead (10, Oldham Co) | 24. Omega Kim (12, Iroquois) |
| 13. Gus Roberts (9, Great Crossing) | 25. Jonathan Pittman (11, Woodford Co) |

Returning placers: Jeffrey Kinley 5th @ 113, Devon Herron 7th @ 120, Dylan Walls 8th @ 120, Thomas Hoppes 8th @ 126

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #4 Walls v. #3 Hoppes, #2 Herron v. #10 Florexille
Quarters: #3 Hoppes v. #9 Martinez, #7 Garcia v. #5 Fuji, #2 Herron v. #8 Bowers, #1 Kinley v. #6 Wells

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Gus Roberts seems to be the pick here, but to be honest, this weight has been total chaos all season and absolutely anything is possible at this weight

Team title race implications: Can Webb find his way to the podium? Or will Wells be the only contending team with a kid on the podium at this weight? Smith may be a sleeper for Ryle in a weight class that has been anything but predictable all season.

Chaos. That's all I can say about this weight. While the top 8-9 has been relatively stable, with only a shuffling of the order, 10-25 has been absolute pandemonium this year. At one point I just didn't update this weight class with the rankings update because it made my head hurt. Hoppes and Kinley have spent most of the season as the top dogs, but Herron and Fuji can definitely upset that apple cart. Walls could also put himself in that conversation. Heck, what am I talking about. This is 126 in 2020. Put all 32 names in a hat and draw one out. There's your winner. Ha ha. Not quite that crazy, but close.

132 lbs.

Favorite: Thomas Deck (12, Madison Central)

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2. Seth Lutes (12, Scott) | 14. Jarrett Sanders (12, Ashland Blazer) |
| 3. Gabe Adams (12, Union Co) | 15. Jalin Polin (12, DeSales) |
| 4. Gavin Andreoni (10, Woodford Co) | 16. Mason Polston (10, Central Hardin) |
| 5. Charlie McKune (9, Moore) | 17. Dylan Berney (12, Conner) |
| 6. Ryan Bellucci (12, St. Xavier) | 18. Keaton Elliot (11, Calloway Co) |
| 7. Jabin Hite (12, Larue Co) | 19. Luke Chapman (10, Lafayette) |
| 8. Jacob Cain (10, Johnson Central) | 20. Gabe Bobay (12, North Oldham) |
| 9. Trevor Villums (9, Male) | 21. Jack Probus (12, Ohio Co) |
| 10. Eric Johnson (11, Simon Kenton) | 22. Trevor Justice (12, Southern) |
| 11. Eric Green (12, Pikeville) | 23. Sam Beckley (12, Wayne Co) |
| 12. Hunter Butler (12, Meade Co) | 24. Austin Gerling (10, East Jessamine) |
| 13. Micah Bowers (10, Campbell Co) | 25. Malachi Young (9, Grant Co) |

Returning placers: Thomas Deck 1st @ 126, Gabe Adams 2nd @ 132, Seth Lutes 4th @ 132, Gavin Andreoni 5th @ 132, Ryan Bellucci 6th @ 126, Luke Chapman 6th @ 106, Trevor Villums 7th @ 113, Eric Green 8th @ 138

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #1 Deck v. #10 Villums. Round 2: #2 Adams v. #8 Bowers, #7 Bellucci v. #5 Hite. Quarters: #2 Adams v. #5 Hite, #1 Deck v. #4 Andreoni, #6 McKune v. #9 Cain

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Luke Chapman was my pick last year at 106 and he came through big, so why not this year. Moving up 4 weight classes is tough and he has been a bit up and down this season, but this is not a wrestler to overlook.

Team title race implications: Adams, Andreoni, and Cain all have high podium potential. IF Deck is not 100% and one of these guys is able to take advantage it could push their team to another level.

This has been a weight with a big unknown all season. 2-time champ Deck had off season surgery and many of us didn't think he would be back for the season, but a superman recovery had him back on the mat by the Christmas holiday. Then a very late season setback had virtually everyone doubting his participation in the post season. And here we are, a day out from the state tournament and Thomas Deck is the favorite to win a third title. Hopefully he is healthy and ready to roll. But if not, there are a host of kids ready to step up and earn that title. Seniors Adams and Lutes have been near the top for the last couple years and look to finish on that top step. After the top 4, this weight is filled with a lot of tough wrestlers who have yet to completely prove themselves at state.

This is another bracket where the draw was not kind to some with #1, #2, #4, #5 all on the top. That puts Lutes on the bottom with a couple ranked young guys.

138 lbs.

Favorite: Chase Yost (12, Woodford Co)

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|--|--|
| 2. Malachi Rider (8, Paducah Tilghman) | 14. Nick Giompalo (9, Johnson Central) |
| 3. Jake Insko (12, Union Co) | 15. Cohner Mullins (10, Oldham Co) |
| 4. Zach Cowan (11, Madison Central) | 16. Reese Haight (12, Daviess Co) |
| 5. Scotty Villums (11, Male) | 17. Nathan Ohlmann (12, St. Xavier) |
| 6. Owen Stacey (12, Campbell Co) | 18. Levi Stull (10, Meade Co) |
| 7. Anthony Pierce (12, South Oldham) | 19. Caige Clark (10, Ohio Co) |
| 8. Austin Grant-Hall (11, Christian Co) | 20. Austin Shaffer (12, Simon Kenton) |
| 9. Sam Grandstaff (11, Conner) | 21. Elijah Fields (11, Belfry) |
| 10. Victor Zamora (12, Whitley Co) | 22. Michael Watts (9, Harrison Co) |
| 11. Rusty Craddock (11, Ryle) | 23. Max Morales (12, North Hardin) |
| 12. Jonathan Phillips (10, Trinity (Louisville)) | 24. Bobby Hale (10, Martin County) |
| 13. Thomas Haggans (11, Lafayette) | 25. Tisen Moore (10, Scott) |

Returning placers: Jake Insko 3rd @ 138, Sam Grandstaff 3rd @ 120, Zac Cowan 5th @ 132, Anthony Pierce 5th @ 138, Chase Yost 6th @ 132

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #8 Stacey v. #9 Grant-Hall, #7 Grandstaff v. #2 Rider (WOW!). Round 2: #1 Yost v. #10 Haggan. Quarters: #1 Yost v. #8 Stacey, #4 Cowan v. #3 Insko, #2 Rider v. #5 Pierce

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Sam Grandstaff has finished 1st and 3rd in his two trips to the horse park, so it's not a stretch to predict him to find his way onto the podium. But as always, 138 is a hammer weight class and he will need to bring his A game to do it.

Team title race implications: This is a spot where Woodford must have big points from Yost. He sits at the top of the bracket with no other top 5 kids. Grant-Hall has a brutal draw with Stacey first round. How he, Craddock, and Giompalo battle through consolations could impact who takes home a trophy.

After a year of regression to the mean, 138 is back to the top of the meatgrinder list. Yost comes in undefeated, top ranked, and hoping to bookend his career with state titles. But he will be challenged by a host of hammers with state title dreams of their own. That list includes prior state champion Grandstaff who is 1 match short of going for his third title in 3 years. Also challenging for the top spot on the podium will be another senior Jake Insko who transferred to Union County this year and Zac Cowan who has battled both seniors in multiple matches this season. A major wild card in the equation is 8th grader Malachi Rider. The #2 ranked youngster has a win over Insko this year, but in a weird twist of events lost in the semis on an illegal slam and then forfeitted to 4th. As a result, he will hit Grandstaff in round 1. OUCH! Those boys better get off the bus ready to roll on Friday.

Consolations will be a circus at this weight. Don't miss that action.

145 lbs.

Favorite: Jakerion Merritt (12, Christian Co)

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|---|---|
| 2. Trevor Pogue (12, Union Co) | 14. Herve Blode (11, Fern Creek) |
| 3. Ty Lehman (11, Trinity (Louisville)) | 15. Austin Peace (10, Ryle) |
| 4. Reece Goss (10, Johnson Central) | 16. Kolby Sparks (10, Martin County) |
| 5. Tristen Spalding (12, Walton Verona) | 17. Cayden Graham (12, Scott Co) |
| 6. Brennon Conrad (11, Simon Kenton) | 18. Darian Camery (12, John Hardin) |
| 7. Jacob Grandstaff (11, Conner) | 19. Azariah Saunier (11, Lafayette) |
| 8. John Lowe (12, Franklin Co) | 20. Tyler Ritchie (12, Madison Central) |
| 9. Chas Fudold (12, South Oldham) | 21. Trent Jackson (12, Moore) |
| 10. Elijah Phan (11, Male) | 22. Colton Smallwood (11, McCracken County) |
| 11. Jackson Grimsley (12, Taylor Co) | 23. Blake Botts (9, McCreary Central) |
| 12. Ethan Futrell (11, Calloway Co) | 24. Grant Holland (11, Pikeville) |
| 13. Carson Deckard (12, Oldham Co) | 25. Landen Boone (12, Daviess Co) |

Returning placers: Jakerion Merritt 1st @ 132, Jacob Grandstaff 3rd @ 132, Trevor Pogue 4th @ 138, Ty Lehman 7th @ 138

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #3 Lehman v. #8 Deckard, #6 Grandstaff v. #1 Merritt.
Quarters: #3 Lehman v. #1 Merritt, #9 Conrad v. #10 Lowe, #7 Fudold v. #5 Spalding, #2 Pogue v. #4 Goss

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Darien Camery missed a large chunk of the season due to an injury during football season, but he is a tough senior who I can see battling through the back side.

Team title race implications: Lots of team trophy implications here. Christian, Union, and Johnson all have wrestlers projected in the top 4. If all goes according to plan, this weight won't impact the standings much. If we see an upset or two, then things could get interesting.

Returning state champ Merritt was dropped into a killer quarter, likely hitting Grandstaff in round 2 and the winner of the Lehman/Deckard match in the quarters. Merritt and Lehman already had a barnburner during the season; don't miss this one on Friday night. In fact, based on my experience don't miss Lehman at all; sparks and bodies will fly. The rest of the bracket is fairly balanced, but we all know how things get turned upside down at state. So mixing the killer quarter up top and an upset and the consolations could get interesting and possibly impact those team scores.

152 lbs.

Favorite: Payne Carr (11, Union Co)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Brayden Giannone (10, Lafayette) | 14. Jeffery Parker (11, Western Hills) |
| 3. David Conner (11, Paducah Tilghman) | 15. Henry Marchal (11, Atherton) |
| 4. Dylan Preston (11, Woodford Co) | 16. Javine Crowley (11, Perry Co Central) |
| 5. Tyler Hudgins (12, Harrison Co) | 17. Bladen Sexton (10, Johnson Central) |
| 6. Carter Messerly (10, Ryle) | 18. Kashiku Hutcheson (11, St. Xavier) |
| 7. Walker McCubbin (12, South Oldham) | 19. Connor Geise (10, Meade Co) |
| 8. Bryce Spickler (11, Simon Kenton) | 20. Wesley Walls (11, Bullitt Central) |
| 9. Bryson Fields (12, Bryan Station) | 21. Desmond Allison (12, Frederick Douglas) |
| 10. Brendan Corley (12, Trinity (Louisville)) | 22. Jonas Rayman (12, DeSales) |
| 11. Colin Walls (10, Caldwell Co) | 23. Kyle Richmond (9, Campbell Co) |
| 12. Jayden Watson (12, Whitley Co) | 24. Chris Morton (12, Larue Co) |
| 13. Kevonni Young (12, Hopkinsville) | 25. Ross Chapman (12, Anderson Co) |

Returning placers: Brayden Giannone 2nd @ 152, Payne Carr 3rd @ 145, Tyler Hudgins 5th @ 152, Dylan Preston 6th @ 138

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #10 Corley v. #9 Fields, #3 Conner v. #5 Hudgins.
Quarters: #1 Carr v. #6 McCubbin, #9 Fields v. #8 Messerly, #7 Spickler v. #2 Gianonne, #4 Preston v. #3 Conner

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Kashiku Hutcheson, got a gut feeling this is a weight where we see some of that St. X magic.

Team title race implications: This is a weight that doesn't look as deep as would be expected for 152, so this is an opportunity for Woodford County and Ryle to score significant points. The Messerly/Sexton match in round 1 could set the team race tone early.

Payne Carr has been battling for podium spots pushing the top kids for years. This appears to be his year. Last year Giannone wowed the crowd with performance at this weight last year as he made a run as a freshman to the state finals losing to Russelburg. Could he get some Union County revenge and spoil Carr's party? Giannone appears to have a tougher road through the bottom half as both Preson and Conner have been rock solid this season.

160 lbs.

Favorite: Dalton Russelburg (11, Union Co)

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|---|--|
| 2. Nathaniel Lawrence (12, Franklin Co) | 14. Jack Calvery (12, St. Xavier) |
| 3. Triston Brooks (12, Woodford Co) | 15. Randy Kinser (11, Martin County) |
| 4. Elijah McCune (12, Meade Co) | 16. Luke Hyden (7, Walton Verona) |
| 5. Tom Ketchen-Carter (11, Campbell Co) | 17. Cameron Baker (11, Apollo) |
| 6. Zlatko Skulijan (12, Hopkinsville) | 18. John Paredes (11, Caldwell Co) |
| 7. Neal Aldridge (12, Christian Co) | 19. Hayden Hartlage (11, DeSales) |
| 8. Kurtis Karr (11, Wayne Co) | 20. Jared Kidd (10, McCreary Central) |
| 9. Cole Nance (11, Anderson Co) | 21. Brandon Burchett (8, Fairdale) |
| 10. Rictor Morgan (12, Simon Kenton) | 22. Justice Avis (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 11. Trevon Warren (12, Fern Creek) | 23. Elvis Tran (11, Atherton) |
| 12. Taylor Eversole (12, Henry Clay) | 24. Landon Barnes (11, Central Hardin) |
| 13. Landon Lenhart (12, Trinity (Louisville)) | 25. Lane Kiser (8, Spencer County) |

Returning placers: Dalton Russelburg 1st @ 152, Nathaniel Lawrence 2nd @ 145, Tom Ketchen-Carter 3rd @ 152, Elijah McCune 6th @ 170, Landon Lenhart 6th @ 145

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #6 Nance v. #8 Morgan. Round 2: #4 McCune v. #6 Nance, #9 Aldridge v. #10 Lenhart. Quarters: #4 McCune v. #9 Aldridge, #7 Skuljan v. #3 Lawrence, #5 Ketchen-Carter v. #1 Russelburg

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Cole Nance impressed me over the summer and even though this weight has some of the most proven wrestlers of any weight I think he can take home a medal

Team title race implications: Brooks and Aldridge are solid placers in a very tough weight class, but can they change up the order of finish? This seems like a spot where Lenhart could make a run and Trinity make a big jump into the conversation for a trophy.

160 is one of the better weights in the state in my opinion. While there aren't multiple state champs in the bracket, there are a number of high previous placers and mutiple wrestlers who have competed under the bright lights of the finals in the past. If I were going to only catch the quarterfinals of one weight this would be my choice.

Russelburg was the surprise of the tournament for most of us last year; he caught fire and won a very good 152 bracket last February. He is no longer that skinny kid from Union County (I think he ate well and hit the weights in the off season) and will be tough to keep from repeating. But Lawrence and Brooks are both very experienced and dangerous wrestlers. And the X-factor here is Tom KC who had knee surgery and did not compete at all this season until regionals. Where is he? Close to 100%? Maybe he is fresh and will be even better. That matchup could happen in the quarters, so Russelburg has a tough road to earn his second title.

170 lbs.

Favorite: Stephen Little (10, Union Co)

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|--|---|
| 2. Colin Stevens (12, Trigg Co) | 14. Kolby Coburn (11, Ashland Blazer) |
| 3. Bryce Moberly (12, North Oldham) | 15. Joseph Bikakis (10, Simon Kenton) |
| 4. Simon Powell (12, Fairdale) | 16. Trey Fleek (10, Ryle) |
| 5. Thomas Boone (11, Larue Co) | 17. Devin Rogers (11, Meade Co) |
| 6. Ron Shackelford (12, Campbell Co) | 18. Sam Kelly (12, Prestonsburg) |
| 7. Nathen Wright (12, Moore) | 19. Caden Hoffman (11, Oldham Co) |
| 8. Oscar JT Adams (9, Christian Co) | 20. Desmond Washington (10, North Hardin) |
| 9. Chase Fink (12, Anderson Co) | 21. Stephen Whitehead (9, Madison Southern) |
| 10. Everett Marret (11, St. Xavier) | 22. Caleb Bowling (12, Lafayette) |
| 11. Jacob Robbins (12, Boyle Co) | 23. Richard Greenwell (11, Western Hills) |
| 12. Nick Stapleton (11, Johnson Central) | 24. Abdul Adahamov (12, Fern Creek) |
| 13. Carter Riley (12, DeSales) | 25. Matthew Wyatt (10, Montgomery Co) |

Returning placers: Colin Stevens 2nd @ 182, Stephen Little 2nd @ 160, Everett Marret 3rd @ 160, Thomas Boone 4th @ 160, Ron Shackelford 6th @ 160

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #9 Marrett v. #10 Adams. Round 2: #6 Shackelford v. #7 Fink, #9 Marrett v. #5 Boone. Quarters: #6 Shackelford v. #1 Little, #4 Powell v. #8 Wright, #3 Moberly v. #5 Boone

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Everett Marrett was in the hunt last season at 160 and with some St X fairy dust he could cause lots of problems in this bracket

Team title race implications: Christian County appears to have the major point scorer in the race for 2nd, but Adams is young and in a bracket surrounded by juniors and seniors he will feel the pressure. This is doubly applicable as he hits Marrett in the very first round. Stapleton could be in the hunt for a podium spot as well to bolster the JC position.

The bracket is just a step behind 160 with a number of very solid, competitive wrestlers. With that I expect the quarterfinals and blood round matches to be really exciting based on a balanced bracket. Now that I think about it, round 2 could be pretty interesting at this weight as well. Fink/Shack, Moberly/Riley, Marrett/Boone, Stapleton/Stevens. Little and Stevens both come in as state runner-ups and have hit a couple times this season with Little winning close matches. Will be interesting to see if Stevens gets over the hump and wins one after dropping down a weight from last season or if Little is just too much.

182 lbs.

Favorite: Micah Ervin (12, Union Co)

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| 2. Brandon Gibson (11, Walton Verona) | 14. Joseph Box (12, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 3. Noah Duke (10, Ryle) | 15. Zane Drury (11, Anderson Co) |
| 4. Cameron Coleman (12, Christian Co) | 16. Kadin McWilliams (11, Danville) |
| 5. Klemmer Nicodemus (12, Ohio Co) | 17. Junior Dablah (12, Central) |
| 6. Trenton Cantlon (12, DeSales) | 18. Hunter Lattin (12, Meade Co) |
| 7. Jerry Simpson (11, Fairdale) | 19. Conor Tolson (10, Daviess Co) |
| 8. Jackson Geilear (10, Woodford Co) | 20. Kenguruka Promesse (11, Bryan Station) |
| 9. Sean Lohden (12, Bullitt East) | 21. Conner Jones (11, Simon Kenton) |
| 10. Jeremiah Harlan (12, Moore) | 22. Steven Watson (11, Whitley Co) |
| 11. Chase Price (9, Johnson Central) | 23. James Arnold (11, Scott Co) |
| 12. Ben Rush (11, Boyle Co) | 24. Ian Daugherty (12, Cooper) |
| 13. Jack Latherow (11, Ashland Blazer) | 25. Isiah Frederich (11, McCracken County) |

Returning placers: Micah Ervin 1st @ 170, Noah Duke 5th @ 182, Brandon Gibson 7th @ 160, Klemmer Nicodemus 8th @ 170

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #3 Gibson v. #5 Nicodemus. Round 2: #4 Coleman v. #6 Cantlon. Quarters: #2 Duke v. #8 Lohden, #7 Simpson v. #1 Ervin, #9 Harlan v. #4 Coleman, #10 Geilear v. #3 Gibson

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: No good reasoning here, but I'm going with Jack Latherow

Team title race implications: Geilear and Price are two young guys who we don't know a ton about, but have the opportunity to score significant points if they can sneak on the podium. Coleman is a key contributor for Christian County in a weight that is very tough at the top, but he has a nice draw that should allow him to advance fairly well.

Micah comes into the season as one of the heaviest favorites, but Duke showed at the Bryce Sheffer duals that he can go with Micah. But can he pull off the upset in that semi. We will find out Saturday morning. After the top 4-5 kids here there aren't as many proven commodities, so expect some shake ups and surprises.

195 lbs.

Favorite: Daulton Mayer (12, Walton Verona)

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| 2. Chandler Miller (12, DeSales) | 14. Larry Ritchie (12, Harrison Co) |
| 3. Levid Rodriguez (10, Johnson Central) | 15. Jacob Mann (10, Dupont Manual) |
| 4. Ryan Martin (11, Trinity (Louisville)) | 16. Treivonta Felton (10, Fern Creek) |
| 5. Ben Bush (12, Central) | 17. Blake Fox (11, Oldham Co) |
| 6. Uriah Virzi (8, Paducah Tilghman) | 18. Bryce Russell (11, St. Xavier) |
| 7. Cameron Brown (12, John Hardin) | 19. Jordan Diaz (11, Montgomery Co) |
| 8. Corinthian Seales-Portee (11, Union Co) | 20. Rowan Brauer (11, Covington Catholic) |
| 9. Conner Lambert (9, Larue Co) | 21. Darryl Dowell (11, Valley) |
| 10. Jesus Avila (12, Fort Campbell) | 22. Rocky Whitehead (10, Madison Southern) |
| 11. AJ Harvey (10, Christian Co) | 23. Brayden Henson (11, Grant Co) |
| 12. Cooper Elliston (10, Conner) | 24. Andrew Sanders (11, Wayne Co) |
| 13. Kyler Lee (12, Central Hardin) | 25. Brayden Jude (12, Martin County) |

Returning placers: Daulton Mayer 3rd @ 182, Ben Bush 4th @ 195, Levid Rodriguez 7th @ 182

Early round matches to watch: Round 1: #3 Miller v. #10 Avila. Round 2: #8 Lambert v. #2 Rodriguez.
Quarters: #7 Brown v. #6 Virzi, #3 Miller v. #4 Bush, #1 Mayer v. #5 Martin, #9 Seales-Porte v. #2 Rodriguez

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Cooper Elliston is dangerous and pulls out some goofy stuff from a lot of different positions; let's see what he can pull out this weekend.

Team title race implications: Rodriguez starts the big guy parade for Johnson Central where they expect to put a few kids in a row on the podium. Christian County needs Harvey to step it up a notch from last weekend and make it high on the podium if they have any shot at catching Union.

Another weight that could see some surprises after the top few guys. With only 3 returning placers, a lot of kids are looking to make their mark this year. Mayer has hammered through his season, but so have Miller and Rodriguez who are both undefeated. Semi round will be exciting here with a very balanced bracket.

220 lbs.

Favorite: Niko Bussell (12, Christian Co)

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|---|--|
| 2. Branson Smith (11, Martin County) | 14. Tanner Coyle (11, Pleasure Ridge Park) |
| 3. Tony Ornelas (11, Woodford Co) | 15. Seth Huff (10, Knox Central) |
| 4. Casey Rauch (12, Campbell Co) | 16. Cameron Purvis (12, Western Hills) |
| 5. Devin Johnson (12, Johnson Central) | 17. Darius Moore (11, Union Co) |
| 6. Zaine Christian (10, Ashland Blazer) | 18. Erik Bell (12, Iroquois) |
| 7. Joseph Fisher (12, Letcher Co Central) | 19. Sam Floyd (12, Bardstown) |
| 8. Colby Stratman (12, DeSales) | 20. Rudy Rojas (12, Moore) |
| 9. Dakota Brooksbank (11, Simon Kenton) | 21. Denarius Barnes (12, Hopkinsville) |
| 10. Blake Young (12, Oldham Co) | 22. Jordan Haskins (11, Waggoner) |
| 11. Reginald Whyte (11, Central) | 23. Zach Watson (10, Walton Verona) |
| 12. Jaybereon Travis (12, Fairdale) | 24. Stefen Serra (12, Central Hardin) |
| 13. Gabe Savage (10, Ryle) | 25. Terry Martin (11, St. Xavier) |

Returning placers: Niko Bussell 2nd @ 220, Casey Rausch 4th @ 220, Branson Smith 5th @ 195, Joseph Fischer 8th @ 220

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #1 Bussell v. #5 Johnson, #6 Fischer v. #4 Rausch, #7 Brooksbank v. #2 Smith. Quarters: #1 Bussell v. #9 Stratman, #3 Orneals v. #4 Rausch, #10 Young v. #8 Christian

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Gabe Savage, the move in from West Virginia, looked very solid at the regional and will likely surprise some folks this weekend

Team title race implications: Savage could have a big impact here for Ryle if he can pull a couple upsets and make his way to the podium. Orneals and Johnson have to be solid for Woodford and Johnson Central; any hiccup here could hurt in the team race.

Bussell returns here to get the title he came up just short of last season. Although there are a couple returning placers here (Rausch and Fischer, along with Smith who is coming up), it really feels like this weight could be wide open after Bussell. I just get a sense that some craziness may happen in this bracket and we find some big surprises on the podium Saturday night.

285 lbs.

Favorite: Mathias Ervin (12, Union Co)

2. Tucker Shelton (12, Larue Co)
3. Dejuan Watkins (12, DeSales)
4. Zac Stray (11, Lafayette)
5. John Stone (12, Ashland Blazer)
6. Israel Tshiunza (11, Frederick Douglas)
7. Ian Hughes (11, Simon Kenton)
8. Say Moe (11, Daviess Co)
9. Reagan Ray (12, Oldham Co)
10. Brandon Key (11, Central)
11. Kamryn Robinson (12, Meade Co)
12. Zach Russell (11, Johnson Central)
13. Noah Jewell (12, Bullitt East)
14. Giovanni Watson (11, Bryan Station)
15. Kyran Jackson (11, Madison Central)
16. Skyeler Tallent (10, Boyd Co)
17. LaQuann Williams (11, Trinity (Louisville))
18. Blaze Cart (10, Apollo)
19. TyDarius Kelly (11, Christian Co)
20. Dashaun Stevenson (10, Holmes)
21. Tayshaun Marshall (10, Ryle)
22. Trevor Addison (12, Scott)
23. Luke Hill (10, Woodford Co)
24. Colton Kessinger (11, Spencer County)
25. Dominic Rulli (11, Cooper)

Returning placers: Mathias Ervin 1st @ 220, Tucker Shelton 3rd @ 285, Dejuan Watkins 4th @ 285, John Stone 5th @ 285, Israel Tshiunza 8th @ 285

Early round matches to watch: Round 2: #6 Tshiunza v. #9 Ray, #8 Moe v. #5 Stray.

Quarters: #2 Shelton v. #3 Watkins (repeat), #10 Key v. #6 Tshiunza, #1 Ervin v. #7 Hughes, #4 Stone v. #5 Stray

Kid who might out wrestle their ranking: Dashaun Stevenson of Holmes makes a run; not sure how long of a drought Holmes has, but they have developed some good big guys in the past

Team title race implications: Johnson Central is known for their big guys and Russell could score some key team points here. Watch out for Marshall as well if Ryle gets some momentum; he wrestled tough at the regional and could challenge some guys this weekend.

Mathias bumps up from 220 in preparation for being a college heavyweight. An injury at the Ironman kept him off the mat for a while and you could see it a little at state duals, but he still pulled off some big wins down at Lindsey Wilson. He looks to be the guy to beat, but from my perspective this looks like a very solid bracket of heavies this year. I know Shelton and Watkins are tough, but not sure they can knock off the reigning king.

Team Champions

Favorite: 1. Union Co (7 finalists, 6 champs, 10 total placers)

2. Christian Co	(3 finalists, 2 champs, 8 placers)	14. Lafayette	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 2 placers)
3. Johnson Central	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 5 placers)	15. Male	(2 placers)
4. Woodford Co	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 6 placers)	16. St. Xavier	(2 placers)
5. Ryle	(1 finalist, 1 champ, 4 placers)	17. Fairdale	(1 placer)
6. Walton Verona	(3 finalists, 2 champs, 4 placers)	18. Oldham Co	(1 placer)
7. Madison Central	(2 finalists, 2 champs, 4 placers)	19. Meade Co	(1 placer)
8. Larue Co	(2 finalists, 0 champs, 4 placers)	20. North Hardin	(2 placers)
9. Trinity (Louisville)	(4 placers)	21. Central	(1 placer)
10. Campbell Co	(4 placers)	22. Wayne Co	(2 placers)
11. DeSales	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 4 placers)	23. Ashland Blazer	(2 placers)
12. Simon Kenton	(3 placers)	24. Caldwell Co	(2 placers)
13. Paducah Tilghman	(1 finalist, 0 champs, 3 placers)	25. Moore	(2 placers)

Not only is Union County entering the state tournament as the favorite to win their 5th team state championship in a row, but they are also likely to break the 2003 South Oldham scoring record of 257.5 points. My current projection is 265.5, so I give them a good shot to do it, but we all know anything can happen at state. While I expect the race for the top spot to possibly be over (or at least close to locked) by the time we head to the hotel Friday night, I think the battle between Christian County and Johnson Central will go right down to the championship finals. I also think the battle for the final overall team trophy between Woodford County, Ryle, Walton Verona, and Madison Central will be tight as well. Madison Central has been the poster child team for injuries. They should still compete for a fairly high placement, but they have lost a lot of potential this year due to injury.