

State champions will be crowned for this season on March 10, which is 35 years to the day that the late Mark Zimmer of Columbus St. Francis DeSales became the first wrestler in Ohio history to win four high school state titles. Since then, 31 young men have joined Zimmer as four-time state champions in the boys wrestling state tournament.

This Sunday, Dillon Campbell (Xenia Legacy Christian Academy) has the chance to join that esteemed list, should he earn the state title at 132 pounds in Division III. In 12 previous state tournament matches, none of the matches has been a decision, with eight of them not going the full six minutes.

It should be noted that Campbell's state tournament weight class this year has eight returning state placers, which is most in the small-school division. In fact, Campbell could face a returning or previous state placer in all four rounds of the tournament. In addition, 2022 state champion Casper Caizzo (Norwalk St. Paul) is in the opposite half-bracket.

Campbell is also one of 24 individuals, competing in 23 weight classes, seeking to repeat as state champion; while there are four additional wrestlers that won state in either 2021 or 2022 that are seeking to earn another state title. This number of returning state champions at a single state tournament is a record for the event that has been held since 1938 when it was conducted at John Hay High School in Cleveland.

Returning state champions in Division I include Ethan Timar (113) and Karson Brown (120) from Lakewood St. Edward, Omar Ayoub (138) and Ethan Birden (165) from Dublin Coffman, Marcus Blaze (Perrysburg) at 132 pounds, Jaxon Joy (Wadsworth) at 150, Eugene Harney (Cincinnati Sycamore) at 157, and Aidan Fockler (Massillon Perry) at 285. Ayoub, Joy, and Blaze are after their third state titles, with Blaze being only a junior. Former state champions include Cole Evans (Perrysburg) at 126, Ryan Bennett (St. Edward) at 144, and Ty Wilson (Dublin Scioto) at 150. Wilson won titles in both 2021 and 2022.

Returning state champions in Division II include Colyn Limbert (120) and Kaden King (157) from Medina Buckeye, Joe Curry (126) and Mitchell Younger (150) from Columbus Bishop Watterson, Brogan Tucker (144) and Gunner Cramblett (175) from St. Paris Graham Local, as well as Max Shulaw (215) Columbus DeSales. Tucker and Younger, both juniors, are after a third state title.

Joining Campbell as returning state champions in Division III are Adam Mattin (Delta) at 113, Abe Hermes (Milan Edison) at 126, Ashton Homan (Monroeville) at 138, Brodie Dominique (Archbold) at 144, Reese Stephen (Barnesville) at 150, Tristin Greene (LaGrange Keystone) 157, along with Xander Myers (Liberty Center) and Keegan Sell (Garrettsville Garfield) at 190; Caizzo is a former champion.

DIVISION I

While St. Edward has won the tournament the last eight time it has been contested (2015-2019, 2021-2023), and now 24 of the last 26 contested state titles, this is going to be a highly competitive team race for both the championship and runner-up trophies. The Eagles qualified 13 for the state tournament, with nine winning their weight class at district.

Those district champions include returning state champions Timar and Karson Brown; returning state runners-up Kade Brown (138), Bennett, and Jarrel Miller (190); along with returning state placers Lucan O'Brien (150), Tyrel Miller (175), and Jonny Slaper (215); as well as two-time state qualifier Aiden

Peterson (165). Returning runner-up Bradley Eaton (157) and 2022 state runner-up Adam Butler (132) are among the other state qualifiers.

Also advancing 13 to state, including nine district champions, is Massillon Perry. The Panthers won state in 2014 after a stretch where they had finished runner-up in the state tournament nine of the previous 11 years. Since then, they have not earned a team trophy at the individual state tournament. Those 13 state qualifiers reflect a school record.

District champions included returning state champion Fockler; returning state placers Mason Rohr (120), Charles Curtis (138), and Marshall Geckler (157); two-time state qualifiers Liston Seibert (113) and Landen Johnson (165); freshmen Lincoln Rohr (106) and Caige Horak (175); as well as junior Mike Millin (215). Two-time state placer Emeric McBurney (126) is among the other state qualifiers.

Two additional teams qualified 10 individuals to the state tournament in the big-school division – Perrysburg, which finished as runner-up at the district tournament they hosted to St. Edward, and Dublin Coffman.

For Perrysburg, which has been runner-up in the Division I state tournament the previous two seasons, and was runner-up to Massillon Perry in 2014, those 10 state qualifiers tie the school record from last year. The Yellow Jackets saw returning state placer Ayden Dodd (106) and two-time state champion Blaze win district titles, with six others finishing as runners-up, and the other pair qualifying with a third-place finish at district. Among the other state qualifiers are impact freshman Grey Burnett (113), 2022 state champion Evans, 2021 state placer Diego Chavez (144), and returning state placer Jake Wood (157).

The Shamrocks won the district tournament at Hilliard Darby, as those 10 state qualifiers eclipse the nine from 2001 as the program high for a season. Winning district titles were two-time state champion Ayoub, returning state placer Grayson Woodcock (157), and returning state champion Birden; while other state qualifiers include impact freshmen Blaze Van Gundy (120) and Eli Esguerra (150), returning state placer Joey Baumann (138), along with Storm Beane (190) and Charlie Mitchell (215) in their second state tournament appearance.

With eight returning state champions and three other individuals that have previously won a state title, the competition in this year's big-school state tournament is going to be dynamite with high-profile wrestlers abound. In fact, eight of the 14 weight classes have six or more returning and/or previous state place-winners.

Headlining the division is a potential state final showdown between two-time state champions Joy and Wilson in the 150-pound weight class. Joy is a one-point loss to Bennett in the 2021 state final at 106 pounds away from also being in position to join the four-time state champions club; while Wilson's blemish at the state tournament is a semifinal overtime loss last year at 144 pounds to Brock Herman, though he bounced back to finish third.

Earlier in this season, the pair did meet in the quarterfinals at the Ironman Wrestling Tournament, a match in which Wilson got the first takedown but lost 11-2. In terms of roadblocks to that finals match, Wilson had 2022 state placer Londen Murphy (Cincinnati Archbishop Moeller) as the other district champion in his half-bracket, while Joy has returning state placer O'Brien as the other district champion in his half-bracket.

Also in this division, there is a potential state final rematch between Ayoub and Bennett at 144. In last year's state final, Bennett took a 4-0 lead into the third period when Ayoub rallied back for three takedowns, the third of which had three-near fall points added to create the final score of 9-6. Seven additional wrestlers in this weight class have previously medaled at the state tournament, those nine in total is an all-division high.

Bennett could face returning state placer Wyatt Brock (Harrison) in the quarterfinal, with two-time state placer Israel Petite (Macedonia Nordonia) as the other district champion in his half-bracket, while returning state placer Andrew Myers (Upper Arlington) could face Petite in the quarterfinal. Assuming Ayoub wins his first match, he will face the winner of an opening round match between two-time state placer Antonio Shelley (Mentor) and 2021 state placer Diego Chavez (Perrysburg); while two-time state placer Jack Dinwiddie (Wadsworth) and state placer Mannix Wasco (North Royalton) meet in an opening round match in the other quarter of that half-bracket.

Two weight classes in the division feature a trio of returning top three place-finishers, 126 and 157 pounds. The 126-pound field is anchored by returning state runner-up Phoenix Contos (Toledo Waite), who has beaten 2022 state champion Evans the last two weeks in the sectional and district finals.

The featured first round match at 126 has two-time state placers McBurney and Konner Lambers (Cincinnati Elder) – both of whom have a top three state placement in their career – facing one another, with the winner likely to see Contos in the next round. The other quarter of this bottom half features returning state placers Huggy Williams (Powell Olentangy Liberty) and Jayden Cochran (Miamisburg). The top half of the draw features Evans, whose quarter includes district champion Harrison Haffner (Brecksville-Broadview Heights); and returning state third Aiden Allen (Cincinnati La Salle), whose quarter includes Khimari Manns (St. Edward).

Returning state champion Harney is the headline figure at 157, where a potential state finals rematch from last year against Eaton looms in the quarterfinal round. That match was won by Harney 5-4 via an escape with 90 seconds left in the bout. The other quarter of the bottom half features returning placers Woodcock and Wood, Woodcock was the district champion, while Wood beat Eaton 6-4 in the district quarterfinal; it should be noted that Woodcock faces 2022 state placer Jared Johnston (Cincinnati Moeller) in the opening round.

In the upper half-bracket, the lone returning state placers are the district champions, Jeremy Ginter (Toledo Whitmer) and Geckler. Ginter is a two-time state runner-up, losing to Wilson and Herman the last two years in the state final, and enters the state tournament with sectional and district final wins over Wood.

Joining those two weight classes with seven returning state placers is the 215-pound weight class, though Alex Taylor (Mount Vernon) is the lone wrestler with a top four state placement finish. Taylor placed third at state in this weight last year as a freshman, and enters the state tournament as a district champion. 2022 state placer Wyatt Walker (Trenton Edgewood) resides in Taylor's quarter bracket, while returning state placer Will Adkins (Cincinnati Moeller) is in the other quarter of the same half along with district champion Millin.

In the upper half of the draw, three-time state placer Slaper and returning state placer Aidan Weimer (Springboro) are the district champions. Returning state placer Brady Quillin (Olentangy Liberty) could

face Weimer in the quarterfinal, and the pair have split matches this season; while returning state placer Cole Dickerson (Lancaster) could face Slaper in the quarterfinal round.

Though just four returning state placers are in the 113-pound field, it is still one of the higher profile weight brackets of the event. All four of those placers are in the upper half-bracket. Returning state champion Timar is looking at a quarterfinal match against either two-time state placer Johnny Green (Aurora) or returning state placer Brock Blankenhorn (Mount Vernon), while returning state runner-up Rylan Seacrist (Brecksville) is in the other quarter of the upper half; Timar beat Seacrist 5-3 in last year's state final.

The district champions in the lower half-bracket are junior Kurt Mokros (Lewis Center Olentangy) and two-time district champion Seibert. Mokros beat Blankenhorn 8-0 in the district final, while Seibert beat Green 10-4 in the semifinal and Seacrist 3-2 in the final at district. This half also includes a pair of freshmen that won OAC Junior High state titles last year, Burnett and Austin Bickerton (Medina Highland); Burnett beat Bickerton 6-3 in the district semifinal before losing 6-5 to Timar in the district final; Burnett is in the same quarter as Mokros, while Bickerton joins Seibert.

The division's lone undefeated wrestler is returning state placer Robert Davis (Stow-Munroe Falls), who is joined by five additional returning placers at 132 pounds. He could face fellow returning placer Jaiden Sarabia (Toledo Whitmer) in the quarterfinal, while the other quarter bracket of the upper half features a rather interesting first round match between two-time state placer Butler and impact freshman Kane Shawger (Cincinnati St. Xavier).

Two-time state champion Blaze, a Cadet World champion in freestyle this summer anchors the other half bracket. The other district champion in that half is two-time state qualifier Marshall Morency (Cincinnati Anderson), who draws 2022 state placer Zach Bergman (Whitehouse Anthony Wayne) in the opening round, with the winner possibly facing returning state placer Jack DeBoe (Mentor) in the quarterfinal.

Other notable teams in the division include Brecksville, which qualified nine in finishing runner-up at the Hoover District to Massillon Perry; Olentangy Liberty, which has eight at state from its district runner-up finish to Dublin Coffman; along with Cincinnati Moeller and Wadsworth, who qualified seven each to state. The other district champion was Cincinnati La Salle, which advanced five to state from Kettering Fairmont.

DIVISION II

St. Paris Graham Local has now won the last 22 contested individual state tournaments (2001-2019, 2021-2023), including last year's 37.5-point differential between the Falcons and second-place Columbus DeSales. This year's Falcons team have qualified nine to the state tournament, which is most in the division, including four district champions: returning state placer Jake Landis (106), two-time state champion Tucker, returning state champion Cramblett, and two-time state qualifier Chett Mannier (190). Returning state placers Hayden Hughes (138) and Bryce Kohler (165) both lost to opposition from Bishop Watterson at the district level.

In terms of a team that might potentially dethrone Graham, both Columbus parochial schools – DeSales and Bishop Watterson – and Medina Buckeye look to have the best shots. Bishop Watterson and Buckeye both qualified seven to state, which for Bishop Watterson ties a school record, while DeSales qualified all its six as district finalists.

Bishop Watterson finished runner-up to Graham in the Wilmington District. The Eagles' lone state tournament team trophy came in a Class AA runner-up finish all the way back in 1979. Four of their wrestlers qualified as district champions: returning state placers Neal Krysty (120) and James Lindsay (138), two-time state champion Younger, and freshman Michael Boyle (165); Lindsay beat Hughes 8-4 in the district final, while Boyle beat Kohler 8-4 in the district quarterfinal. Also among the state qualifiers is returning state champion Joe Curry (126), who was upset by freshman Josiah Puller (Wilmington) 10-7 in the district final.

From the seven that got out for district champion Buckeye at Kenston were five weight class champions, which is the most for any team in the division. Said group features state champions Limbert and King, state placer Blake Bartos (113), two-time state qualifier Danny Beckett (144), and two-time state placer Eddie Neitenbach (190).

DeSales was runner-up at the Norwalk District to Wauseon for a second straight year, but had four district champions: freshman Joel Welch (157), returning state placers Andrew Barford (175) and Lincoln Shulaw (190), along with state champion Max Shulaw. Finishing as runner-up were returning state placers Aidan Rush (150) and Zack Lopez (165).

In terms of the individual competition, the division features seven returning state champion individuals. The weight class with the most returning state placers is 157 pounds, with a total of six led by returning state champion King. The bottom half bracket is the one to monitor, as it has four of those returning state placers: Savier Faulks (Steubenville), returning state finalist Lance Overmyer (Clyde), Rylan Hurley (Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary), and P.J. Murphy (Reading).

Faulks and Murphy qualified for state as district champions, Overmyer and Hurley both finished third at district, with Hurley losing 7-4 to King in the quarterfinal. The other district champion in the upper half-bracket with King is the freshman Welch, who beat Overmyer 6-5 in the semifinal. Welch is looking at a likely quarterfinal against two-time state placer Cooper Rathburn (Columbus Bishop Hartley), who lost to Murphy 3-2 in the ultimate tiebreaker in a district final.

It is the middle-to-upper stretch in this division that has the most credentialed talent present. While it is six returning state placers at 157, there are five each at 150, 165, and 175. Two-time state champion Younger features in the 150-pound weight class. His lone loss since Ironman came in the OHSWCA State Duals against two-time state placer Brody Saccoccia (Steubenville) by a 3-2 score.

Both wrestlers won district titles and could meet one another in the semifinal on Saturday night, though Younger does have returning state placer Rush sitting as a potential quarterfinal opponent. In the lower half-bracket, returning state placer Tristan Craddock (Lodi Cloverleaf) and now two-time state qualifier Bo Hertenstein (St. Mary's Memorial) are the district champions, while returning state placer Coltyn Reedy (Thornville Sheridan) could face Craddock in the quarterfinal since he lost 3-2 in the district final to Saccoccia.

The lone district champion among the five returning state placers at 165 is Kaiyon McKinney (Sandusky Perkins), who was runner-up last year in the 113-pound weight class for Elyria in Division I. McKinney beat returning state placer Lopez 2-1 in the district final, after Lopez beat fellow returning state placer Luke Schlosser (Belleville Clear Fork) 1-0 in the semifinal. The other district champ in McKinney's half is

Cohen Bunting (New Concord John Glenn), though returning state placer Kohler is in the quarter-bracket with Bunting.

In the upper half-bracket at 165, the district champions are the freshman Boyle, who beat Kohler at district, and Quinn Callock (Alliance). Callock could face Schlosser in a quarterfinal bout; while the freshman Boyle is slated to face returning state placer Devin Shaw-Mason (Parma Padua Franciscan) in the opening round, an opponent he beat 5-3 in mid-January, and then could face Lopez in the quarterfinal.

On the other hand, at 175, the four district champions are all returning state placers: Barford; Cramblett, who has one in-state loss the last two seasons); two-time placer Steven Duffy (Peninsula Woodridge); and Hunter Dietrich (Minerva) in that order on the bracket. The other returning state placer is Aden Strahler (Vincent Warren), who lost 4-3 to Dietrich in the district final, and is in the same quarter-bracket as Barford.

The division features a pair of undefeated wrestlers entering the state tournament, Marius Garcia (Bexley) at 106 pounds and Tyler Scharrer (Canfield) at 138.

Garcia went 0-2 in last year's state tournament at this weight class, but beat returning state placer Aiden Ohl (Ontario) 3-2 in the district final. This weekend he seeks to end an almost 40-year drought for his school in terms of producing a state champion, as the only previous titlist was Bernie Miller in 1985.

Three returning state placers are in this weight class, with Landon Jenkins (Carrollton) being the other district champion in Garcia's half-bracket. Landis is a district champion in the lower half, while the other wrestler occupying a district champion line is Dominic Prospero (Canton South), who pinned Garcia in consolation of last year's state tournament. Coming off the district finals loss, Ohl could face Prospero in the quarterfinal on Saturday morning, a rematch from last year's state tournament first round when Ohl won 4-1.

Scharrer is one of four returning state placers at 138, and could face returning state runner-up Hughes in the quarterfinal, with two-time state qualifier Mason Turnbaugh (Ontario) the other district champion in the upper half-bracket. Three-time state placer Josh Carman (Carrollton) and returning state placer Lindsay are the district champions in the lower half of the draw.

Other notable teams in the division that qualified five or more wrestlers to state include Wauseon (eight), Napoleon (six), and Beaver Local (five). Joining Buckeye, Wauseon, and Graham as district tournament champions is Steubenville, which won the title at Gallia Academy despite qualifying only four to state.

DIVISION III

Like last year, Barnesville comes into the state tournament with eight qualifiers. However, different from last year is that all of them enter the tournament as district finalists, including seven as champions from Heath: state champion Stephen, three-time state placer Dakota King (138), two-time state placer Skyler King (157), returning state placers Jonathan Hutsman (113), and Ayden King (165), now two-time state qualifier Karson Milhoan (144), and freshman Colt Carpenter (126). Now two-time state qualifier Hines Ford (175) is the additional state qualifier.

Should Barnesville win the state tournament title, they would become the first East District team to win a state title since Claymont won the Division II state title in 1992. In terms of Division III for the East District, the only title came in 1988 from Belmont County neighbor Bridgeport, in what was the first year for divisions (the tournament was previously split by classification).

The three-time returning champion in this division is Legacy Christian, which won the district tournament at Troy. The previous time a Division III team won three consecutive titles was Troy Christian from 2007-2009, which then finished fifth in 2010. Immediately before the Troy Christian run, Sandusky St. Mary's Central Catholic won five in a row from 2002-2006. This year the Knights bring only five to the state tournament, though four of them are returning state medalists: three-time placer Eli Campbell (120), three-time champion Dillon Campbell, along with Nathan Attisano (126) and Brayden Brown (150).

Milan Edison has been runner-up in this tournament three consecutive years, and is seeking a first state title in the individual state tournament, which is something they thought was coming their way in 2020 before the COVID-imposed cancellation. The Chargers advanced six to state, including four district champions who have all placed twice previously at the state tournament: returning state champion Abe Hermes, Marcus Medina (157), Kohen Horvath (165), and Luke James (175).

Also in play for the team trophy hunt is Delta, who advanced eight to state, and beat Milan Edison for the district title at Rossford. The Panthers have four relatively recent trophy finishes (titles in 2014 and 2016, runner-up finishes in 2013 and 2015), and were champions of the OHSCWA State Duals last month. Returning state champion Adam Mattin was their lone district champion; additional notable state participants include returning state placers Tyler Barnes (120) and Connor Sintobin (190), along with now two-time state qualifier Landon Lintermoot (144).

Eight returning state champions are featured in the small-school division, and outside of the already discussed 132-pound weight class, the cast is headlined by the pair of state champions that both are competing at 190: Xander Myers and Keegan Sell. Those two, who both won district titles, are joined by three other returning state placers in the bracket. All four district champions are returning state placers: Myers is paired with Owen Pummel (Lewistown Indian Lake) in his half-bracket, while Sell is with Ronnie Thomas (Mechanicsburg). Sintobin, who lost to Myers in both the sectional and district finals, could face Thomas in a quarterfinal match.

Two other weight classes feature seven returning state placers, though neither weight has a returning state champion. Four of those wrestlers at 120 pounds placed in the top four of last year's state tournament. Returning third-place finishers Logan Dean (Bethel-Tate) and Trevor Wilcox (Tontogany Otsego) are district champions in the top half of the draw; Wilcox will face 2022 state placer Corbin Kimmel (Haviland Wayne Trace) in the opening round. Returning state placer Trenton Rossiter (Sarahsville Shenandoah) and returning state runner-up Parker Pikor (Mentor Lake Catholic) are the district champions in the bottom half.

Rossiter could face three-time state placer Eli Campbell, who is twice a state runner-up, in the quarterfinal; Campbell was pinned in the district semifinal by Ethan Cantrell (West Union). Pikor would be projected to see either Cantrell or returning state placer Tyler Barnes (Delta) in a quarterfinal bout.

In the 165 class, only two of the four district champions are among the seven returning placers, with both Ayden King and Kohen Horvath positioned in the top half-bracket. King beat returning placer Gage Bolt (Williamsport Westfall) 1-0 in the district final, after Bolt beat fellow returning placer Tyson Clear

(Malvern) 7-3 in the semifinal; while Horvath knocked off two returning placers on the way to a district title, Braxton Quaintance (Kansas Lakota) 6-3 in the semifinal and Brencyn Evans (Monroeville) 11-1 in the final.

Horvath opens the tournament with Sam Mentzer (Marion Pleasant), who lost 6-5 to King in the district semifinal, and then could face returning state placer Tyson Seesholtz (North Lima South Range) in the quarterfinal round. In the lower half-bracket, Quaintance vs. Bolt and Evans vs. Clear are first round matches feeding into district champions, Hunter Randall (Casstown Miami East) and Greyson Siders (Dalton) respectively.

Another very deep weight class comes at 150 where there are six returning state placers, including state champ Stephen. In Stephen's half of the draw, only Brayden Brown is a returning state placer, though he enters the tournament off a 6-4 district final loss to fellow returning state placer Luke Dolan (Barnesville); Brown is positioned in the other quarter of the draw.

Returning state placers in Jake Lyons (Massillon Tuslaw) and Dolan are the district champions of the lower half-bracket. Lyons could face returning state placer T.J. Wilson (Zoarsville Tuscarawas Valley) in the quarterfinal, while Dolan would likely see three-time state placer Daxton Chase (Marion Pleasant), who lost a hotly contested 3-2 district finals match to Stephen.

Even though the 215-pound field only features three returning state placers, all finished within the top three of last year's state tournament. Returning state runner-up Lucas Thomas (Cadiz Harrison Central) is the lone undefeated wrestler in the small-school division. He is joined by two-time state placer Abe Delano (Defiance Ayersville) and returning state runner-up Wyatt Ripke (Archbold).

Delano split matches with Ripke last year at the sectional and district level, but bracketing put Delano with eventually state champion Keegan Sell in the semifinal round; while this year Delano is 4-1 against Ripke, including wins in the sectional and district finals. Thomas and Delano are in opposite half-brackets. Thomas is joined by freshman Danny Zmorowski (Lake Catholic) as a district champion, while Ripke is in Zmorowski's quarter.

Other schools with a notable number of state qualifiers are Apple Creek Waynedale (6), which ties a school record. Covington, Miami East, Galion Northmor, Lake Catholic, Monroeville, Independence District champion Perry, Rootstown, and Garfield Heights Trinity all have five apiece.