

## **State Dual Meet Championships at North Point High This Weekend**

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*Defending Champion Winters Mill is Heavily Favored in the 1A/2A Division. 3A/4A is Wide Open*

The state dual meet tournament this weekend at North Point High School in Charles County is a contrast of expectations between the two divisions. Winters Mill is heavily favored in the 1A/2A class and the field is wide open in the 3A/4A division.

The 1A/2A division has returning Dual Meet State Champion Winters Mill as the #1 seed. Owings Mills and Glenelg make return trips to the championships, and face a rematch of last year's semi-final won by Owings Mills. The East Region is represented by Kent Island.

Winters Mill is the highest ranked public school in the state by the Maryland State Wrestling Association. The Falcons are 4<sup>th</sup> in the dual meet rankings, and tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> in the overall rankings. Leading Winters Mill are state ranked wrestlers; Flavio Valdez Cortez (106, #13), Taylor Logue (113, #6), returning 1A/2A State Champion Wes Cook (145, #6), #8 Cody Sharkey (152), 182lb grappler Ryan Barron (#30), Ryan Hightower (220, #11), and Jake Utz (285, #12). Chris Rose (126) and Jimmy Guerico (138) are a few other top guys on the roster.

Second seeded Owings Mills (Honorable Mention in duals, tie for 22<sup>nd</sup> overall) has five state ranked wrestlers on their squad. Three time state placer, and 1 time 1A/2A State Champion, Demetrius Johnson is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> at 145. Teammate Antwan Reddick (152, #6) was a 3A/4A State Runner-up at Duval High School last year. Jake Rendelman (106, #8), Brandon Bekar (113, #21), and Komil Juraev (182, #18) are the Eagles other top stars. Dan Grossman (132), Abdul El-Omari (170), Alex Solomon (195), and Tyquez Shade (220) are Owings Mills' other notable wrestlers.

Glenelg was given the 3<sup>rd</sup> seed based off last year's loss to Owings Mills. The Gladiators are focused on revenge as they come into the championships as the #9 dual meet team, and #11 overall. Returning 1A/2A State Champion Sean Twigg (#3 at 285) is the anchor of a lineup that features seven state ranked wrestlers, and one honorable mention grappler. #11 Tim Null (106) has put together an impressive sophomore campaign. Null won the title at the War on the Shore Tournament, and was runner-up at the prestigious Mount Mat Madness Tournament. #12 Ryan Carter (138) is very dangerous. Carter owns a win over David Mohler (Loyola, #4). Parker Griffie (120, #21), Austin Pagnotta (145, #27), Anthony Pagnotta (170, #10), and Austin Twigg (195, #25) round out the Gladiator's ranked contingent. Mike Budock is listed as honorable mention at 126.

Kent Island (#24 dual meet) is a young, up and coming team with a bright future. They are led by a triple threat of very talented brothers. All three Smith brothers are ranked in the top twenty in the state. Stevan (113) and Colton (132) are 19<sup>th</sup> in the state. Zach is #7, and owns a win over Mt. St. Joe's Zeke Salvo (#3) at Mount Mat Madness. Freshman 106lb Justin Thomas is ranked #27 and senior Cody Foxwell is #23 at 182.

The 3A/4A division is wide open as any of the four teams have a legitimate shot to come away with the title. The returning state duals champion Urbana Hawks are seeded #2 this year and will square off with 3<sup>rd</sup> seeded South River. Urbana beat South River in a dual meet in the beginning of the season. South River is coming in riding a wave of confidence after picking off #8 River Hill in the regional finals. The other semi-final pairing puts #1 Damascus against #4 North Point. Damascus has yet to lose this year.

On paper Damascus is the 3A/4A favorite. The Swarmin' Hornets are the #7 dual team in the state, and #8 overall. Damascus has a good mix of young guys and veterans. Mikey Macklin (106, #3) is a returning state placer. Mike Wilkerson (120, #4), Cory Obendorfer (126, #16), Owen Brooks (138, #18) are among Damascus' outstanding lightweights. #18 Johnny Fischer (152), #24 Ari Cacopardo (170), Caleb Baisden #5 at 182, and Andrew Nickell (285, #13) are the upperweights ranked by the MSHA. 195lb Mike Scafate is an honorable mention grappler.

Urbana (#11 dual meet, #9 overall) is strong in the lower weights. Five of their first six wrestlers are ranked in the state. The Makosy brothers lead off the lineup with Jake #10 at 106, and Tyler #23 at 113. Returning 3A/4A state placer Morgan way is the #2 grappler at 120. Sophomore Jimmy Allen is #25 at 126. #4 Nick Frank (138) is a three time state placer. The Hawks have two upperweights ranked in the state, Mike Virnelson (195, #20) and Nick Keller (285, #6).

South River is lead by a strong group of seniors. The Seahawks are #12 in the dual meet rankings, and #10 overall in the state. Returning 3A/4A state runner-up Collin Alley is #13 at 138. His brother Austin is #13 at 126. Tre Puccinelli is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> at 132, but has been all over the lineup in favor of matchups. 195lber Anthony Rossi (#13) has wrestled up as high as heavyweight. Jordan Orme (120, #17) is another grappler who moves around a lot for South River. John Owens (106), Joe Coyle (120/126), Brendan Norris (160), and Ryan Walker (170) look to help the Seahawks reverse the loss to Urbana.

The host school North Point earned the #4 seed coming out of the South Region. North Point is ranked #13 in both the dual meet and overall rankings. The Eagles are capable of running the table here, as they have a win over River Hill at the Warrior Duals. North Point also lost to South River at the Warrior Duals. #12 Dominick Summers (113), #16 Kyle Gascon (120), #12 Malachi Edmond (126), Tyler Morgan #20 at 132, Andrew Lohr (152, #22), Collin Schirf (160, #25), and heavyweight Travis Bonds (#30) are the Eagles' state ranked wrestlers.