

MPSSAA State Wrestling Tournament Preview – Upper weights

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March 1, 2013

**All rankings referenced are the Official Maryland State Wrestling Association Rankings; if the ranking is followed by an "o" it refers to a wrestler's overall state ranking, all other numbers refer to their divisional ranking.*

170

3A/4A

The #2 and #3 wrestlers in the 3A/4A division should square off in the quarter finals. #2 William Holder-Moore (Bel Air, #6 o) was 6th at this weight in last year's state tournament. Holder-Moore owns a win over Wicomico's Alex Pullen from the Battle by the Bay finals. He is an UCBAC Champion whose only loss this season happened in the regional finals against Wilde Lake's Tola Morakinyo.

#3 Stephen Potemken (Wootton, #13 o) was a Montgomery County runner-up to Damascus' Caleb Baisden. Potemken beat Baisden to win the West Region title, and now holds a 2-1 edge in the season series. Potemken has two wins over Billy Mills (Tuscarora) and one over Curley's Sean Bieschke (#17 o).

Frederick and North Region runner-up #8 Billy Mills (Tuscarora, #21 o) faces Wes Beattie (Reservoir, #22 o) in the first round. Beattie was 3rd in Howard County and the East Region. It would not be a surprise if Beattie were to advance to the quarter finals.

The winner of Mills/Beattie more than likely runs into #5 LK Lyles-El (Parkdale, #18). Lyles-El was a Prince George's County runner-up, losing to Oxon Hill's Darrian Hollings 3-1. He avenged that loss in the South Region final beating Hollings 5-1.

#1 and undefeated Morakinyo (#5 o) has a Howard County and East Region Championship among his wins. Morakinyo also has victories over Gilman's Garrett Pfeifer (#8 o), McDonogh's Theo Duncan (#16 o), as well as two wins over Glenelg's state placer, Anthony Pagnotta.

Morakinyo will probably draw #4 Baisden (#14 o) in the quarter finals. Baisden was a Montgomery County Champion and West Region runner-up. He dropped from 182 for the postseason but has wins over North County's Malik Smith and Bethesda-Chevy Chase's Jesse McNeil while at 182.

#6 Hollings (#19) also won his county, yet lost in the region final to the same wrestler he beat for the county title; Lyles-El.

Hollings' quarter final opponent would be the winner of Meade's Juan Coronado (#23 o) and #7 Luke Britton (Linganore, #20). This match is too close to call, as either wrestler has a legitimate shot at winning. The rankings favor the Frederick County Champion Britton, who also won the North Region.

1A/2A

Winters Mills' Chase Cullison is the #2 ranked grappler in the bracket. Cullison is ranked #9 overall by the MSHA after winning Carroll County and West Region crowns. At the counties and regions Cullison beat North Carroll's Eddie Merrill and South Carroll's Jake Pooton two times. Merrill and Pooton are returning state placers.

Edgewood's Shawn Kluchinsky (#25 o) should move on to square off against Cullison in the quarter finals.

Easton's 8th ranked Ryan Anthony is not ranked overall in the state after losing to Kluchinsky at the region tournament. Anthony was the Bayside Conference Champion this year.

#1 Matt Gancayco (Patuxent, #3 o) is seeking his 2nd straight state title. The two time SMAC Champion and three time South Region Champion was 4th in the state as a sophomore. Gancayco beat Pagnotta in the South Region final. He is the favorite to win the state title.

#6 Dave Doring (Perryville, #24 o) is likely to meet #3 Merrill (#10 o) in the quarter finals. Doring was 2nd in the UCBCA Tournament, but won the region crown by defeating Kluchinsky in the finals.

Merrill, a junior, is looking to become a two time state placer and improve on last year's 5th place performance at this weight. Merrill was the Carroll County and West Region runner-up, losing to Cullison both times.

Two returning state placers battle in a preliminary match that could go either way. #5 Pagnotta from Glenelg was 6th at 160 last season. Pagnotta (#12 o) was a county and region runner-up. #4 Pooton was 5th at 160 with Pagnotta forfeiting the potential meeting last year. Pooton was 3rd in the county and region, losing to Cullison at both events.

The winner will meet Northwest-Baltimore City's Brandon Pitts in the quarter finals. Pitts was a city and North Region Champion.

182

3A/4A

There are four state ranked grapplers in each side of the bracket, but the bottom half figures to be a little tougher as the #1, #3, #4, and #5 guys are placed there, including a returning state champion.

The state's top ranked 182lber is also ranked #20 nationally by InterMat. The senior is looking to cap off his second consecutive undefeated season with his 2nd state crown. Lineburger was a state runner-up as a sophomore. He is a two time SMAC and South Region Champion. Lineburger has a 7-2 win over Gancayco in a dual meet this season.

Lineburger should meet #3 Chen Han (Wootton #8 o) in the quarter finals. Han is a county and region runner-up. In both final matches he lost to Bethesda-Chevy Chase's Jesse McNeil.

#5 Amont Hawkins (North Hagerstown, #10 o) was a Washington County Champion, and placed 3rd in the West Region. Hawkins won the Hub Cup Tournament this year at 195lbs beating Huntingtown's Mike Wilkerson (Wilkerson was still at DeMatha at the time) and Urbana's Mike Virnelson.

Hawkins will probably meet #4 Malik Smith (North County, #9 o) in what could be an exciting 2nd round match. Smith is an Anne Arundel County and East Region Champion.

#2 McNeil (#7 o) sits atop the upper bracket. McNeill was the Montgomery County Champion and West Region title winner over Han. At the regional duals McNeil beat Damascus' Baisden and Hawkins. McNeil has a win over Dakota Wilhelm at the Warrior Duals.

#7 Wilhelm looks to advance and face McNeil, in hopes of revenge. The La Plata wrestler is #15 overall in the state. Wilhelm was a SMAC and South Region runner-up to Lineburger.

#8 Brian Kirby (River Hill, #20) was at 170 most of the season, but moved up to 182 for the end of the season. Kirby was the Howard County Champion. He was a region runner-up to Malik Smith.

#6 Mike Virnelson from Urbana is looking to place in the state tournament for the first time in his career. He's on a roll right now capturing titles at the Frederick County and North Region Tournaments. Virnelson beat returning state placer Adam Fitzwater (Brunswick) in the county finals.

1A/2A

State title favorite Steven Schmitz from South Carroll is #3 in the overall state rankings. He should advance to the finals where he could meet Fitzwater or Wicomico's Alex Pullen.

Schmitz, last year's state runner-up at this weight, is undefeated on the season. Schmitz has three wins over Fitzwater, a win over DeMatha's Clay Conaway (#6 o) and a win over Han. He won titles at the Oakdale Bear Cave Brawl and the Hub Cup. Schmitz captured his second straight Carroll County crown and first region title this year.

Schmitz should square off with the winner of #8 Dominic Clarke (Oakland Mills, #22 o) and Fallston's Austin Rutkowski (#23 o). This match is too close to call. Clarke did beat Rutkowski in the SnOverlea Tournament finals, but the win was in overtime 4-2.

Clarke was a Howard County and South Region runner-up. Rutkowski won the UCBAC Tournament, and placed 3rd in the East Region losing to Pullen 5-3.

Harford Tech's Nathan Cook (#24 o) has come on strong at the right time of the season. Cook was runner-up at the UCBAC Tournament and East Region Tournament.

#5 Garrett Lewis (Liberty, #14 o) faces off against #6 Komil Juraev (Owings Mills, #19). Lewis was 3rd in Carroll County and 4th in the West Region. He has a win against Virnelson earlier this year. Juraev won county and region titles for the Eagles.

#7 Sean Kinney (Calvert, #21 o) has battled inconsistency this year. He started out the season ranked by the MSWA but dropped mid-season because of some losses. He was only 5th in the SMAC Tournament, but bounced back to win the South Region crown over Clarke.

He faces Josh Jasick (Queen Annes, #25 o) in the first round. Jasick was 3rd in the Bayside Conference and 4th in the East Region.

#3 Fitzwater should advance to face the winner of Kinney/Jasick. Fitzwater was 6th at this weight last season. Fitzwater was a Hub Cup runner-up losing to Schmitz. He was a Frederick County and West Region runner-up.

Freshman sensation #4 Kevin Snyder from Century is 3-1 vs. Lewis this season. The last two wins were in the counties and regions where Snyder finished 2nd and 3rd respectively. Snyder (#13 O) also has a win over Winters Mills' Cullison from a dual meet.

#2 Pullen (#4 o) was 4th in the state at 170 last season. He could give Schmitz a run for his money assuming they both reach the finals. Pullen won his first Bayside and East Region Championships this year, after being 2nd at both as a junior and 3rd at both as a sophomore.

195

3A/4A

#1 Ralph Bernardo sits atop the 195 bracket that has five state ranked wrestlers on each side. Bernardo (#2 o) was 3rd at last year's state tournament at 220. He is a two time County and region champ.

#3 Anthony Rossi (South River, # 10 o) will face Bernardo in the quarter finals. Rossi was a county champion and region runner-up.

#5 Brock Turnbaugh (Hereford, #15) faces Stephen Decatur's Adam Bargar (# 24 o) in a first round match that should be a good one. Turnbaugh is a Baltimore County Champion and region runner-up. He beat returning state placer Payton Beachum (Western Tech) in the county finals.

#6 Casey Wokocha (Eleanor Roosevelt, #17 o) was a county runner-up losing to Terry Nance in the finals. Wokocha won the South Region crown avenging his loss to Nance in the semi-finals. In the region finals Wokocha beat Huntingtown's Mike Wilkerson.

#2 Cory Daniel (River Hill, #4 o) was 6th in the state last year. He is a two time Howard County and East Region champion.

#8 Kyle Lamond (Northern Calvert, #19 o) draws Quince Orchard's Nelson Reyes in the 1st round. Lamond was a SMAC runner-up and placed 3rd in the region. He has split matches with Wilkerson the last two weeks.

#7 Wilkerson (#18 o) transferred from DeMatha in January. Wilkerson was 3rd at Mount Mat Madness. He was 3rd at the SAMC Tournament and 2nd in the region. Wilkerson beat Lamond in the region tournament.

#4 Tarrence Henry (Catonsville, #14 o) has been very inconsistent this year. He was 5th in the county, but came back and beat county champion Turnbaugh in the regional finals.

1A/2A

West Region Champion Austin Keadle (Williamsport) draws Marriott's Ridge #23 overall Chris Park in the first round.

#7 Beachum #16 o), who was 6th at this weight last year, faces #2 Ridge Myers (Fallston, #8 o). Myers was 4th in the state at 220 last season.

#6 Deon Hector (W.E.B. Dubois # 13 o) faces Wicomico's #3 Kenny Vercilien (#9 o) in the first round.

#4 Mike Laury (Lackey, #11 o) will face Winters Mills' Malik Randall in the 1st round. Randall was ranked in the state at one point this season.

#1 Matt Olason (Queen Annes, #3 o) was 5th at this weight at last year's state tournament. He will likely face Glenelg's Austin Twigg (#22 o) in the quarter finals.

#8 Robby Happy (Oakland Mills, #21 o) is on a collision course with Dunbar's #5 Aaron Savage (#12 o).