

2012 Class A Wrestling League Championships Hosted by Hyde School, Bath, ME

INDIVIDUAL PREVIEW

By: Rich Gorham, Head Wrestling Coach Phillips Academy Andover

106lb: Choate's Riley O'Connell was runner-up a year ago and has beaten all comers. Tabor's Dylan Genasci-Smith, Loomis' Kyle Douglas, and NMH's returning place winner Henry Weiss (fourth a year ago) will challenge. Watch out for Hyde-Bath's Sam Williams.

113: Tabor's superb freshman John Anderson is the man to beat here. Deerfield's Christian Saccone, Nick Lai of NMH and Austin Wang at Hyde-Maine look to challenge.

120: Andover's Christian Vallis won at 112 a year ago and edged top challenger Chandler Mendenhall of Worcester (4-112) in the finals of the Northern Tournament last weekend, 2-0. These two have faced off many times, and it's always close. NMH's Jake Mario (3rd at 112 year ago) battled a mid-season injury. Loomis' Nate Cleveland (5-112), Choate's Junwoo Choi (6-119), Tilton's former placer Dave Pluhar and Hyde-Woodstock's Peter Markham (6-125) also tough.

126: A pair of two-time champs set to square off here in NMH's Geoffrey Verallis (103 in 2010, 119 in 2011) and Deerfield's Luke Mario (103 in 2009, 119 in 2010). Mario missed last year's Class A with an illness but has come back strong. These two stars have never met. WMA's Joseph Thibault WMA (2-119) should push for a top spot. Tilton's Pat McInnis beat Hyde-CT's Marcos Mercado (3-119) in the finals of the Northern Tournament in a wild match.

132: Andover's Brandon Sneider won the title at 125 a year ago, beating Choate's Austin Wruble in the finals. The two could pair off again this year. Sneider won the dual meet in overtime. Tilton's Matt McInnis, NMH's Dulat Murat and Williston's Ezra Wool hope to challenge. Look out for returning placer Jake Farias of Tabor (3-125).

138: NMH's Spencer Shishman has been dominant all season. Andover's Sven Lerner (3-130), Tabor's Alex Jacob (4-130) and Exeter's Sean Haggerty (5-119) are all proven winners.

145: Choate post-graduate Eddie Carroll won a Connecticut state title a year ago. Loomis veteran Sam Broda (2-145) has placed 4th, 3rd and 2nd in the last three Class A tournaments and would like to finish with a title. The two were set to face off in a dual meet on Wednesday of tournament week. NMH veteran Max Adler (3-140) and Northern champ Andy Pierce of Williston (6-135) are plenty tough. Hyde-CT's Kevin Smith (6-145), Exeter's Pat O'Connell and Alec Randall of Hyde-Maine should contend.

152: One of the marquee weights of the tournament, with big-time star power at the top. Andover's Colton Dempsey is a two-time champion and National Prep place winner, and Tabor's Torin Zonfrelli won a title at 112 as a freshman and has been runner-up at 130 and 160 the last two years. In 2010, Dempsey beat Zonfrelli for the 130 title, and we may see a rematch here. However, neither has faced Wilbraham's Ryan McLarney, who must be considered a dark

horse threat to win it all. Worcester's Kevin Sprague, Hyde-Woodstock's Kenrick Vincent (6-145) and Sean Lee of Tilton (5-140) will challenge.

160: A very deep weight with at least eight quality wrestlers. NMH post-grad Matt Libby has dominated prep New England this season. Andover's Anthony Tedesco won the title at 152 a year ago, is a three-time medalist, and is talented enough to push Libby. Tabor sophomore Jack Bertolini (3-152) can go with the big boys, as can Tabor's Patrick Mcfaul (4-145), Loomis's Zach Harris (2-140) and Wilbraham's Carrick Driscoll. The talent doesn't stop there as Hyde-Maine's Chester Hill and Tilton's Dan Hunt (5-145) are also tough.

170: Another weight with two stars headlining the top. NMH junior Stephen Piascik won the title at 160 a year ago and is strong and powerful. However, he has not faced Hyde-Bath's Bemnet Banks, a post-graduate who won the Massachusetts All-State title a year ago and has not been challenged this season. The finals match should be a good one. Those hoping to spoil the party include Andover's James Palmer, Choate's Zach Bears, and returning place winners Miko McGuire (5-152) of Tabor and Sam Goldsmith (6-152) from Williston.

182: Tilton's David Welch won the title at 171 a year ago and placed at the National Prep. He is a powerful and dominating wrestler. Exeter post-graduate Matt Sullivan edged Welch in their dual meet, 2-1, and Welch hopes for a rematch. NMH's Yvonne Biselele, Hyde-Bath's Lukas Fisher and Williston's Simon Wool are capable of doing some damage. Loomis' tough Nathan Harris was felled by a late season injury.

195: Exeter PG Michael Sullivan is the leader here, but Tabor's powerful Michael Edwards (3-189) is a two-time place winner and ready to win a title in his senior year. NMH's David Coleman and Williston's Patrick St. Martin are tough. Watch out for Kyle Faatz of Tilton and Michael Novas of Hyde-Bath.

220: Three very tough wrestlers at the top here in Exeter's TJ Blackburn, Choate's Ryan Ruiz and Worcester's John Robinson. Nikitta Smolentsev of Hyde-Bath hopes to challenge the big three, along with Mike Kanda of Hyde-Woodstock and Brandon Diaz of Williston.

285: Perhaps the most wide-open weight class. NMH's Henry Anderson made the big leap from backup to top contender this year, and could push for league and Prep NE titles. Williston's Connor Adams is a two-time placer and a proven winner. Choate's Dan Piscatelli is a serious title threat. An unfortunate injury ended the season of Tabor's Peter Dimaggio too early, but McKinley Halperin-Reiss has moved up into the weight and could be a factor.

RETURNING CHAMPIONS

Christian Vallis Andover (120): 1st at 112 in 2011

Geoffrey Veralis NMH (126), 1st at 103 in 2010, 1st at 119 in 2011

Luke Mario Deerfield (126), 1st at 103 in 2009, 1st at 119 in 2010

Brandon Sneider Andover (132), 1st at 125 in 2011

Colton Dempsey Andover (152): 1st at 130 in 2010, 1st at 140 in 2011

Anthony Tedesco Andover (160): 1st at 145 in 2010

David Welch Tilton (182): 1st at 171 in 2011

FOUR-TIME MEDALISTS

These wrestlers have won three Class A medals and will look for a fourth today

Brandon Sneider Andover: 3-119-2009, 2-125-2010, 1-130-2011

Colton Dempsey Andover: 2-125-2009, 1-130-2010, 1-140-2011

Torin Zonfrelli Tabor: 1-112-2009, 2-130-2010, 2-160-2011

Sam Broda Loomis: 4-130-2009, 3-135-2010, 2-145-2011

Anthony Tedesco Andover: 4-140-2009, 1-145-2010