

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

### THE TEAM CHASE

By: Rich Gorham, Head Wrestling Coach Phillips Academy Andover

Although perhaps not quite the juggernaut of last year, Coach Rob Buyea's **Northfield Mount Hermon** squad is nonetheless favored to win its third straight title, fourth in five years, and tenth overall. The **Hoggers** (12-9 in dual meets at last check) wrestle a challenging schedule with several trips out of New England, and should be well seasoned for another title run. At least five Hoggers will be among the favorites to win individual titles: two-time champ Geoffrey Verallis (126), returning titlist Stephen Piascik (170), the much improved Henry Anderson (285) and newcomers Ryan Slishman (138) and Matt Libby (160). Also look out for Jake Mario (120) and veteran leader Max Adler (145). Throw in quality wrestlers Henry Weiss (106), Yvonne Biselele (182) and David Coleman (195), and you have a team that could win it all.

Over the past two years, the **Choate Wild Boars** have made the leap from second-tier status to the elite of the Class A. Led by Coach Sam Doak and assistant LJ Spinnato, the Boars have improved from 6-15 in duals two years ago to 15-1 this season heading into their Wednesday showdown with Loomis, with big wins over Andover, Exeter and Suffield. Riley O'Connell is the favorite at 106. Austin Wruble is a title contender at 132, and post-graduate Eddie Carroll has been dominant at 145. Watch out for returning placer Junwoo Choi (120), plus Jack Bertolini (160), Zach Bears (170), Ryan Ruiz (220) and Daniel Piscatelli (285).

Conan Leary and Connor Bozzi led the **Tabor Seawolves**, perhaps the most balanced team in the league, to a 17-2 dual meet record. Star Torin Zonfrelli (152) has placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> the last three Class A tournaments. Hard-working Michael Edwards has made huge improvement over the last two seasons and is a threat to win it all at 195. Superfrosh John Anderson is the favorite at 113. Tabor just keeps rolling out tough, seasoned wrestlers, with the likes of Dylan Genasci-Smith (106), Jake Farias (132), Alex Jacob (138), Patrick Mcfaul (160), Miko McGuire (170), and McKinley Halperin-Reiss (285). If not for a late injury to senior heavyweight Peter Dimaggio, the Seawolves might have been favored to win it all.

The **Loomis Chaffee Pelicans** compiled a 14-6 dual meet mark under new coach Ben Haldeman and assistant Andrew Hutchinson. Star Sam Broda (145) was runner-up a year ago and is ready to win it all. Returning placers Zach Harris (160) and Nate Cleveland (120) will help the Pelican cause. Kyle Douglas can score big points at 106. Peter Falsey (152) and Will Fierston (170) can place high.

The **Andover Big Blue** struggled in dual meets this season and stood 7-6 entering Wednesday's traditional matchup with Exeter. However, Coach Rich Gorham and Mark Efinger's team won last weekend's Northern tournament and should score high with the likes of Colton Dempsey (152), a two-time Class A champ, plus returning titlists Christian Vallis (120) and Brandon Sneider (132) and past champion Anthony Tedesco (160). Also tough are Sven Lerner (138) and James Palmer (170). Watch out for big men Alex Davidson (220) and Khalil Blassigame (285).

Veteran coach Dave Hudson has been coaching up a storm at **Exeter** (10-9), and his team has shown great improvement during the season. Indeed, while post-graduate stars Matt Sullivan (182), Mike Sullivan (195) and TJ Hepburn (220) are the **Big Red's** big guns, veterans Sean Haggerty (138) and Pat O'Connell (145) are capable as well. Cassie Corey (132) is perhaps the best female wrestler in the Class A this year.

The **Phoenix of Hyde-Bath** (9-7) will host this year's Class A for the first time since 2006. Coach Logan Kidwell's team has a winning record with several tough wrestlers and one big-time star in post-graduate Bemnet Banks (170), a Massachusetts state champion. Also plenty tough are Chester Hill (160), Nikitta Smolentsev (220), Alec Randall (145) and Lukas Fisher (182). Austin Wang (113) can score points.

Coach Matt Kanelong has built up the program at **Williston Northhampton** and led his team to an 11-7 dual meet mark this season and a runner-up finish at last weekend's Northern tournament. Connor Adams is a title contender at 285, but Patrick St. Martin (195), Brandon Diaz (220), Sam Goldsmith (170) and Ezra Wool (132) are also capable of a high place finish.

Coach John Rand had another solid season at **Tilton, as he led the Rams** to a 10-12 dual meet mark and challenged the league's top teams. National Prep place-winner David Welch (182) is one of the best in the league. Former placer Dave Pluhar (120), Sean Lee (152), Dan Hunt (160), Ki Tae Park (145) and Kyle Faatz (195) are capable of placing high. Watch for the exciting McInnis brothers, Pat (126) and Matt (132).

Coach Gordie Lockbaum has several tough contenders at **Worcester Academy** (4-9). Chandler Mendenall (120) and John Robinson (220) are serious title threats for the Hilltoppers. Kevin Sprague (152) is a good wrestler in a deep weight class. Worcester also features the Cassamasima brothers: Brandon (145) and Dominic (285).

Coach Wes Jenkins has some talent down at **Hyde-Woodstock** (7-12). Marcos Mercado is a proven **Wolfpack** winner at 126, and Kevin Smith can go with anyone at 145. Kenrick Vincent is a challenger at 152, and Mike Kanda is a force at 220.

The **Titans** at **Wilbraham & Monson** (3-17) of coach Allen Hsiao have two wrestlers capable of winning it all in Joe Thibault (126) and Ryan McLarney (152).

The **Deerfield Big Green** (2-15) struggled with low roster numbers this season, but not with quality wrestlers. Christian Saccone is a title threat at 113, and two-time champion Luke Mario (126) has made a return from the illness that sidelined him last year and will challenge for the top spot. Sloan Damon is solid at 132.