

1977 Buckeye Conference...

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Four-horse race in Buckeye wrestling

Sandusky is picked to repeat as conference champ

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It's the time of the year when Al Voggenthaler becomes a gambler. He is playing a four-horse parlay this year and hopes the dark horse (his team) of the quartet has the better stretch drive.

Voggenthaler, Ross' wrestling coach for the past four seasons and now well into his fifth, is slimming down his stable of wrestlers in preparation for this Saturday's Buckeye Conference Wrestling Tournament, one of the tougher such tournaments in the state of Ohio.

The Ross coach will take his charges to Elyria for the tournament that was switched from Mansfield due to the gas shortage.

"I figure it will be a four-team race," the bookee, er, coach said. "It looks like Sandusky and Elyria will have a close battle for first with Mansfield and Ross in the battle, too."

He shrugged off his track record for years two and three at Ross and is

keeping year one and four clearly in mind. The in-between years produced two consecutive seventh place finishes in the eight-team tourney while the end years were memorable second place finishes.

In the '76 tourney held at Ross, the Little Giants led going into the championship round but eventually lost to Sandusky 128-121½. The Ross team had three division champions last year and two of them are back. Along with the defending champs, Ross also has two wrestlers back who took runnerup honors.

Jessie Heidelberg, 108, and heavyweight Jim Smith will be defending their titles with Aaron Sewell (135) and Clarence Parks (158) geared for improving a notch from the second place finishes of the last BC tourney.

"I think we have a shot at three four champs," Voggenthaler conjectured, and continued to outline Ross's best bets.

"Heidelberg and Smith are back at the

same weight and have good shots at winning again. Parks, if he has everything together, should win, and Sewell will be right in there, too."

Voggenthaler figures that Sandusky has a shot at six individual champions but figures his team could possibly have more wrestlers placing in the tourney.

"I think we can place as many as any other team," he confirmed, "but individual champions will decide it."

That's why he figures Sandusky will probably sit on top of the heap again.

"I think Elyria has a shot at four or five titles, too," Voggie said, lending fuel to his feeling that the closest battle will be at the top between Sandusky and Elyria.

Mansfield could be at a disadvantage according to the Ross coach because of the closing of the Mansfield schools.

"Mansfield was only able to start practice last week," he pointed out. "They wrestled Marion Harding late last week and Mansfield won 33-22, but they

had three wrestlers who did not make weight."

For Ross to sneak up through the pack to the front, Ross's stretch drive will have to begin right out of the starting gate.

"A lot depends on the seeding," he explained. "If we can get seeded and get into matches with wrestlers from the lower teams (Marion, Findlay, Admiral King, and Lorain) where we could possibly pick up a lot of pins, that would definitely help us along the line."

Continuing, Voggenthaler added a little doubt about help from other quarters. "We have got to have help from teams below us but I don't feel we will get it."

The wrestling begins at noon at Elyria High School with the championship matches at 7 p.m. Saturday evening.

NOTE — A complete rundown of Ross's 13 wrestlers in the tourney as well as entries from the other seven schools will be published on Thursday.

