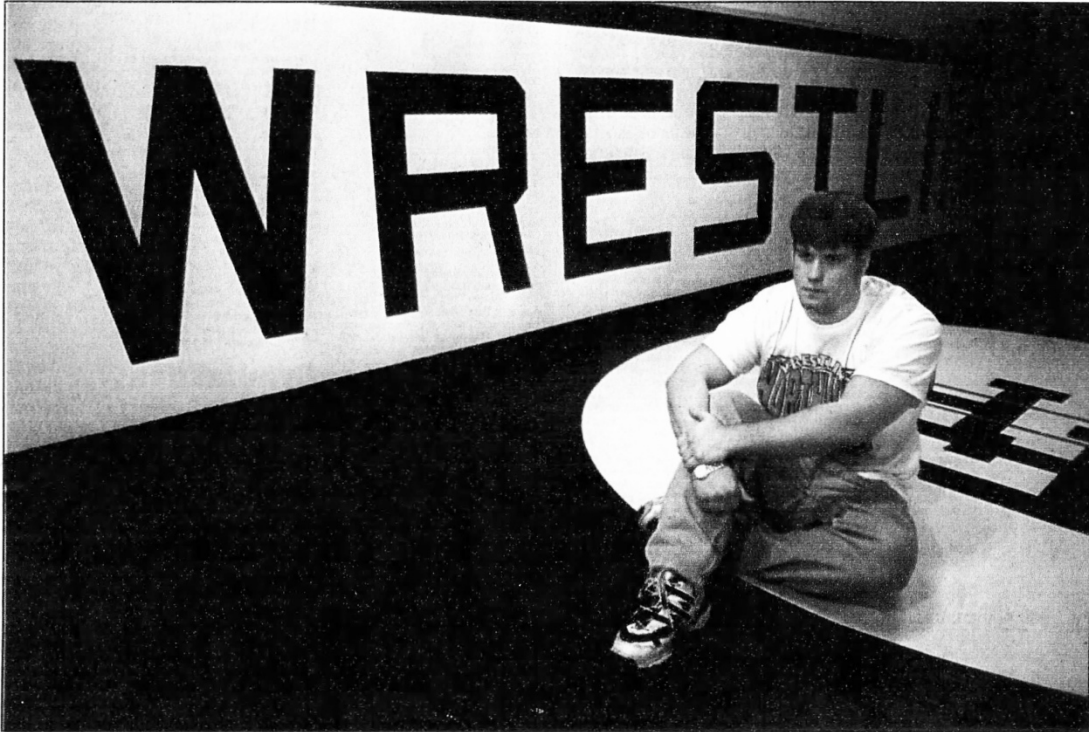


1997 DISTRICT...

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

# Root rocks the cradle



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

AARON ROOT, shown in the wrestling room at Fremont Ross High School, will compete at the district meet Friday and Saturday at Toledo Rogers.

## Ross junior's patented move places him in district meet

By BRIAN SPIESS  
Sports editor

**F**remont Ross wrestling coach Grover Dowell is in the clutches of one of his pupils, Aaron Root, during a December workout at the North Street school.

"This," Dowell explains to his team, "is how to escape a cradle hold."

Silence.

Dowell begins to realize his demonstration's downfall. He can't move.

"Once he gets you in that cradle, you don't get out of it," Dowell said this week, remembering the day Root got the

best of him. "I found that out myself."

Root and Dowell now laugh about that demonstration, which ended when Root "giggled and let loose so it would look good," Dowell said. But that event turned out to be a demonstration of the 215-pound junior's principal talents: Strength and coachability.

Those strong points helped Root win the 215-pound championship Saturday at the sectional wrestling meet in Defiance. He won all four of his matches, including a 17-12 decision over top seeded Bobby Ortiz of Defiance in the finals to advance to districts

and earn The News-Messenger's Athlete of the Week award.

If Root (25-7) continues his hot streak and wrestles well Friday and Saturday at the Division I District at Toledo Rogers, he will qualify for the state tournament March 6-8 in Dayton.

"Every day before I go to sleep," Root said, "I think about that."

His coach expects to travel to Dayton with Root and Don Wensinger, who qualified for districts at 145 pounds. Root will be a No. 1 seed at Rogers.

"At 215 you need quickness and strength, and he's got

both," Dowell said.

Root has a strong work ethic, running extra laps in the wrestling room at Ross.

"And he responds to what he's been told," Dowell said. "He's very coachable."

Root, who is in the middle of five boys in his family, took up the sport in eighth grade when some friends went out for the team. He had "decent success" that first year, but it wasn't until this year that he gained the confidence he needed to reach his potential.

"Coaches really helped me a lot, saying, 'you can do this,

See ROOT, B2

### Aaron Root Profile

**School:** Fremont Ross; **Class:** Junior; **Sports:** Wrestling (215), football (DT); **Hobbies:** lifting weights, running;

**Family:** Parents Dave and Deanna; brothers Chad (20), Drew (16), Bryan (14) and Lee (13)

# Root has chance to make state

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you can do this,' " Root said.

"I like his personality." Dowell said, "He has a winner's cockiness, but he has a real pleasant-type personality."

Henry Sewell, a classmate of Root's who admits he knows little about the sport, is a fan of Root because of that personality. Sewell has attended most of Root's matches and laughs when he pictures Root slapping at an opponent to gain a mental edge.

That's different from the off-the-mat Root, right?

"Heck yeah, he's really not like that at all," Sewell said. "His personality is that of a jokester."

Sewell will be watching this weekend because "he's my friend and I just want to see him go to state."

If Sewell's premonition is to be validated, Root will need to place his opponents in the cradle hold. "That's my move," he said.

The cradle, which Root estimates led to 14 of his 16 pins, is put on like this: Root gets on top of his opponent and reaches across their face; he reaches through his opponent's legs with the other hand and turns them on their back.

"It's a great feeling, knowing that you beat the guy," Root said. "Knowing you were better."

Just don't tell that to coach.

In Division I, Fremont Ross's Aaron Root (215 pounds) and Don Wensinger (145) will compete at Toledo Rogers.

"Aaron usually starts real good. Donnie is a little slower to start, very methodical, and he continues to go after a guy," said Dowell, who believes the 145-pound class is one of the toughest at the Div. I district.

"But it was the toughest at sectionals, and Donnie was tough at sectionals," Dowell said. "I think he can do it again."

Root's path to state is a little easier, Dowell said, because he won the sectional championship and will face another sectional's fourth-place finisher.

# Fremont Ross's Root earns trip to state tournament

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross junior Aaron Root will make his first trip to Fairborn to compete in Thursday's state championships after finishing second in Saturday's Division I district meet at Toledo Rogers.

Root, wrestling at 215 pounds, reached the finals Saturday, where he lost to Nick Ciesinski of Sylvania Northview.

"He had a really good first two rounds," Ross coach Grover Dowell said. "I don't know if it was nerves or what, but both kids (in the finals) looked timid."

Ross's other district qualifier, Don Wensinger, did not make the

state meet at 145 pounds.

"He came back and had a good match against (Jerome) Potts of Toledo Whitmer," Dowell said of Wensinger's consolation match at 145 pounds.

Root (28-8) will face Sean Cronin of Cincinnati Moeller (26-10) in his opening match Thursday at the E.J. Nutter Center near Dayton.

The meet runs through Saturday.

"We'll take him down this year and hopefully place, then next year we'll have a repeater," Dowell said.

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■ **State pairings, B2**

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