

LITTLE GIANT STATE WRESTLERS WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS OF FACING FAMILIAR OPPONENTS AT STATE MEET

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Mar 7, 2018 | [Boys Wrestling](#)

FREMONT – Is it better to know an opponent or go in blind? If one has wrestled his opponent before, is it better to have won and gained a mental advantage or to have lost, which provides extra motivation for revenge?

As Fremont Ross' trio of wrestlers, Garrett Barth, Lamonte Chapman, and Caleb Wood, make their way this weekend to Columbia for the state tournament, the Little Giants each try to figure out whether familiarity with an opponent is an advantage or not as they try to position themselves for a place on the podium.

“From a coach’s standpoint, we should know who the kid is, to scout him out and see what he does so we can build off that in training up the kids in setups and takedowns,” Ross coach Chad Hetrick said. “So, it’s a benefit for us.”

Also making the trip to Columbus is Jackson Weissinger, serving as an alternate at 160 pounds. Weissinger will have a chance to compete if an injury or a wrestler fails to make weight.

Chapman, who finished second in the state as a sophomore, enters the final meet of his career with a 35-5 record this season. His opening-round opponent in the 138-pound weight class is 39-0 Daniel Segura of Dublin Scioto.

Chapman won’t know anything more about his opponent until they meet on the mat, but it’s not the first time he’s gone to Columbus in the dark.

“I’m just going in there,” Chapman said. “My sophomore year, I went into it blind, but I ended up taking second in the state. Then, in my junior year, I went in too confident, so I didn’t do as well. Now I have to do better than last year. It’s my last year, I have to do better.”

At 170 pounds, Barth (42-3, and winner of his second-straight district championship last week), will get a rematch with Harrison’s Simon Shirley (33-9). The two met earlier this season at the Dave Rohr Invite, where Shirley quickly got the better of Barth and pinned him in under 30 seconds.

“He caught me in a cradle and beat me in that,” Barth said. “This week I’ve been practicing a lot on how to defend cradles, how to finish my shots, and hopefully be able to transition that into my match against him this weekend. I’m excited to face him one last time.

“I’d rather know the guy I’m going to be facing, now I know what he’s going to try to do to me,” he added. “He’s going to go out knowing he has a win against me and thinking he’s going to get another one. I want to take that to my advantage.”

Hetrick said Barth has the mentality one needs when facing an opponent for a second time and trying to even the score.

“Barth, he’s the type to want to get revenge; that’s his mindset,” Hetrick said.

“He’s not going to let it bother him, but he likes to still go after the kid, even

though he's been beaten. He's got the mental toughness it takes to step up to the plate. I think he'll be fine as far as that goes."

Like Barth, Wood (40-7) knows his first opponent at the 190-pound class at the state meet but, unlike his teammate, is hoping for a similar result. Wood and Canton McKinley's Micha Clemson (45-7) crossed paths at the Dave Rohr Invite, where Wood pinned his opponent in the second period, giving Wood one of his 30 wins this season by pinfall, tying the program's single-season record.

Wood said he is cautious about being overconfident as he makes his first trip to the state finals.

"I'm confident in that I beat him, but I still have to wrestle him just like I wrestled him the first time, no matter what," Wood said. "I've only wrestled, I think, four kids in my entire bracket. The rest of them, I have no idea who they are. Who is this kid? How does he wrestle? You have no idea."

In preparation for the biggest matches of the season, the Ross wrestlers traveled Monday and Tuesday to Genoa Area High School to work out with state qualifiers from around the area. It gave them a chance to compete against top-flight competition in preparation for performing on the state's biggest stage.

"To get that quality in one room and go through a practice, it keeps the kids mentally focused," Hetrick said. "And that way, we're not just down here wrestling with four guys, we have a team we can go with and get a good workout in."

The competition begins Thursday at Ohio State University's Schottenstein Center. The Division I first round is scheduled to begin at 5:35 p.m., with the first round of consolation matches beginning at 8:25.

Saturday, the championship quarterfinals get underway at 11:20 a.m. with consolation round two beginning at 1:40. The championship semifinals get underway at 6:30 with the consolation quarterfinals at 8:40.

The final day of the wrestling season begins Saturday at 10 a.m. with consolation matches leading up to the parade of champions at 5:30 and the championship matches at 5:45.

Hetrick said his wrestlers' advancement to the state meet is the culmination of years of hard work by the entire Fremont wrestling program's athletes and coaches.

"These kids have been through a lot of coaches since they've been little; it's all built up to this point," Hetrick said. "I'm fortunate that my staff and I get to take them to this level, but it takes a community to build champions. It's not just me or somebody on the coaching staff, it's taken a lot of coaching to get them where they're at now."

GARRETT BARTH TAKES 8TH AT STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT; CALEB WOOD SETS NEW PIN RECORD

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COLUMBUS – A place on the podium and a new program record for pins in a season. Ross' state tournament-bound wrestlers had a nice showing on the sport's biggest stage.

Garrett Barth earned himself eighth place in the 170-pound weight class Saturday morning, while Caleb Wood picked up his 31st pin of the season, setting a new Ross single-season record Friday.

"I'm glad I got on the podium," Barth said. "I wish I had gotten a little higher, but I fought through the tough matches that I had and was able to move forward." Barth opened the tournament Thursday night with a 4-3 decision victory over Simon Shirley, of Harrison. Friday morning, however, Barth lost 6-3 to Medina's Brady Chrisman, sending Barth into the consolation bracket.

There, Barth eliminated Lakewood St. Edward's Michael Garcar with a 7-2 win, which clinched Barth a spot on the podium. A loss in his last match on Friday, a 3-1 decision to Domenic DiPietro, of Cuyahoga Falls Walsh Jesuit, placed Barth into Saturday morning's seventh/eighth-place match against Westerville North's Mitch Potterf.

"It was a stressful weekend," Barth said. "From winning the first match and then having to move forward and win the next match to place, after losing the second match. I didn't have a place until I won my second one, so it was a little stressful." Potterf then defeated Barth by a major decision score of 13-5. Barth's wrestling career ended with him standing eighth in the state.

"It definitely was bittersweet," he said. "It was a sad feeling, but also good. I have worked really hard for four years now.

"I definitely grew a family from this, not just friendships. It taught me a lot of responsibility and leadership and tons of other things like hard work and so much more."

Wood began his tournament run at 195 pounds on Thursday by being pinned by Canton McKinley's Micha Clemson. Wood rebounded, however, that night by pinning Vandalia Butler's Nick Coyle in the first round of the consolation bracket, giving him the Little Giants' pin record.

"Going into the match, Garrett was saying, 'You've got to set the record, you've got to set the record, this is the kid to do it, you can pin this kid,'" Wood recalled.

"In the match, I was taking it slow, then I caught him on his back, and I said to myself, 'I've got to pin this kid now.' he was strong, and I was squeezing for dear life.

"I didn't express it too much, I'm pretty humble, but, in my head, I was happy that I set the record."

Wood's tournament, however, ended on a sour note on Friday when he was disqualified against Cincinnati LaSalle's Michael Baker. After reversing a hold on Baker, Wood applied a seat belt maneuver, injuring Baker. The head official initially ruled the move potentially dangerous, but after consulting with the secondary official, changed the ruling to an illegal move.

Because Wood was assessed an illegal move that resulted in injury, the rules state that if the injured wrestler cannot continue, he wins the match. Baker said he could not continue, and Wood's season was over.

Wood said losing by disqualification is worse than being pinned and beaten by a better wrestler.

"For sure. You never know the outcome of what could have happened," Wood said.

"His next match, (Baker) wrestled the kid I lost 8-2 to at districts, and he teched him 15-0, so he must not have been hurt too bad."

Wood said the disappointing finish will serve as extra motivation for him as he tries to return to the state meet next year in his senior season.

However, there is no next year for Lamonte Chapman. Wrestling at 138 pounds, Chapman opened his tournament Thursday with a 9-4 loss to Daniel Segura of Dublin Scioto. He wrestled Thursday night again in the consolation round, where he lost a 6-4 decision to Cincinnati Princeton's Jovan Fuqua. The loss ended Chapman's stellar career disappointingly short of the runner-up place he finished in as a sophomore.

Head wrestling coach Chad Hetrick was unable to be reached for comment.