

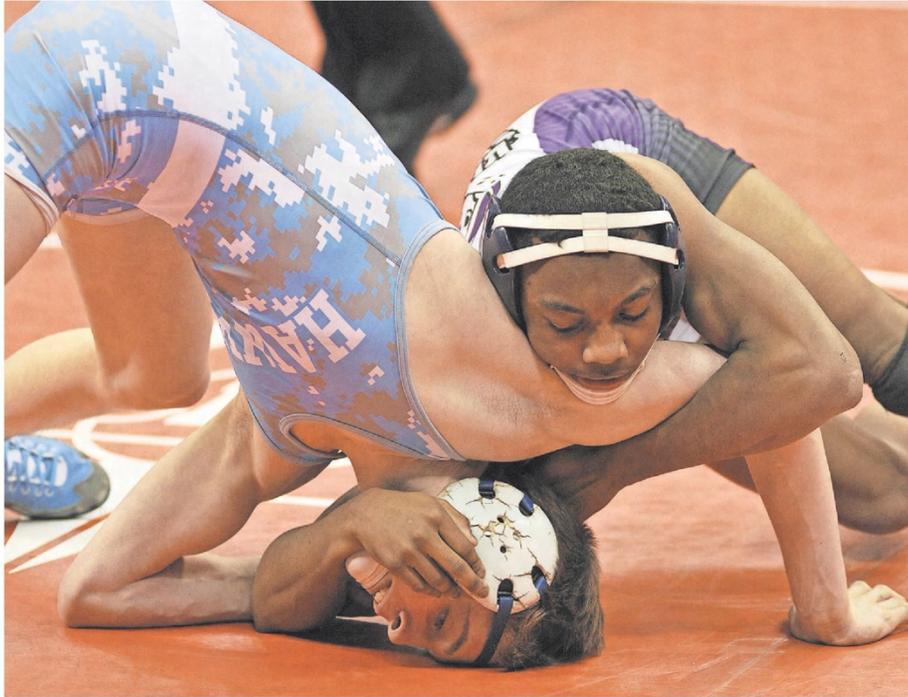
Fremont Ross' Lamonte Chapman (33-6, 120 pounds) is the only area athlete competing in the Division I tournament. In Division II, Bellevue's Collin

Division I

Fremont Ross: (120) Lamonte Chapman (Fremont Ross) pin A.J. Warner (Fairborn) 4:45. Chapman advances to the quarterfinals today.

WRESTLING

ROSS' CHAPMAN TO GO FOR STATE TITLE



MITCHELL PE MASILUN/GANNETT OHIO

Freemont Ross' Lamonte Chapman wrestles with Fairborn's A.J. Warner in the 182-pound class during Day 1 of the OHSAA State Wrestling Tournament on Thursday.

'I think they underestimated me a lot coming in here'

DAN GILLES
CORRESPONDENT

COLUMBUS - Not many people knew who Freemont Ross sophomore Lamonte Chapman was heading into this weekend's Ohio State Wrestling Tournament at Ohio State's Value City Arena.

After his performance this weekend, especially in his Division I 126-pound semifinal match against Oregon Clay's Nick Henneman, they know who he is now.

Chapman (46-6), who came in as the third-place finisher in the tough Perrysburg District and was ranked 10th in his weight class, dominated Henneman, the No. 2-ranked wrestler, from pillar to post on Friday night, advancing to his first state championship match in his first state tournament appearance with a stunning 20-4 technical fall.

Chapman was one of three area wrestlers to advance to tonight's state

championships, joining Clyde senior 220-pounder Garit Witt in Division II and Oak Harbor senior 285-pounder Brandon Garber in Division III. He is one of 11 wrestlers to place in the top eight out of 14 state qualifiers.

"I think they underestimated me a lot coming in here," said Chapman, who began the day with a 1-0 win over Olentangy Liberty's Jordan Rosselli. "I wasn't even supposed to make it out of districts, but you just had to believe. My quarters match was pretty tough, but I got through that and I was just confident going into the semifinal."

Chapman - Fremont Ross' first state finalist since Trey Grine was a state runner-up in 2014 - will meet the projected state champion Noah Baughman of Wadsworth on the big stage. The two did not cross paths at Perrysburg last weekend. But for now, Chapman is happy to take in the moment.

"They always say it's always hard to beat someone a third time, and we lost

to Henneman twice already this year," Little Giants second-year coach Chad Long said. "We kept Lamonte in good spirits, we came in with a good game plan and we executed it to a 'T.' It's not better, it's way better than what we thought. To come from two losses to tech the kid in the semis is unbelievable."

Witt (30-2), the projected state champion, reached his first state title match of his career with a 7-2 win over Alliance Marlinton's Ben Higgins, then a 5-2 win over St. Paris Graham freshman Johnny Shafer in the semifinals.

"It's a great feeling," Witt said. "I'm ready for it. I could go right now if they wanted us to. I just did what I had to do to win both matches. The double-leg takedown worked for me in both matches, and that allowed me to set the tone."

Witt will meet Middletown Madison's Nick Svarda, ranked third in his

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Wrestling

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weight class, in Saturday's championship match at Value City Arena.

Garber (43-6), the projected state runner-up, pinned Madison Plains' Andrew Bevan in 4:49 in the quarterfinals before outlasting Caldwell's Chance Rucker in the ultimate tiebreaker, 6-1.

He escaped and then took Rucker, ranked sixth in his weight class, to his back, missing a pin by a split second.

"I went 0-2 down here last year, and I thought about quitting after that,"

said Garber, who will meet Patrick Henry's Brandon Bennett in the finals.

"I've only been wrestling since seventh grade, and my coaches have worked me hard and my teammates have been very supportive and they kept pushing me, and now, look where I'm at. I'm one win away from getting my picture put up in the wrestling room like all the other state champions, and I can show my future kids that."

Oak Harbor has made its debut in Division III a memorable one, placing fourth in the team race heading into today.

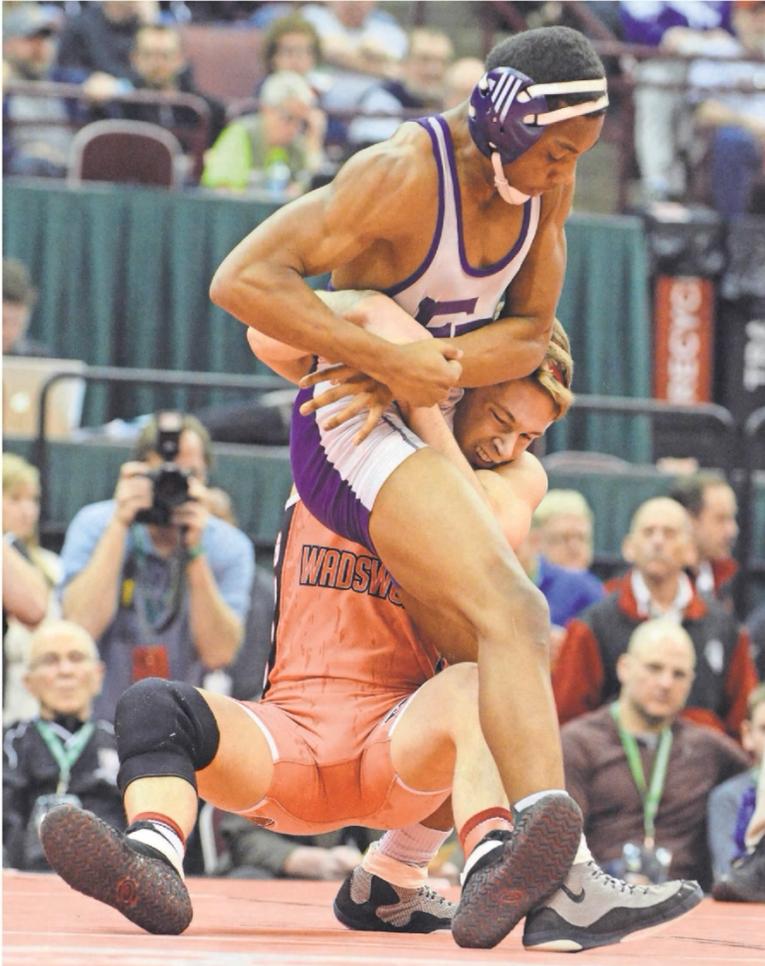
The Rockets will place five of their eight state qualifiers after going 0-

for-5 last season. However, Garber is their only finalist.

Other semifinalists for the Rockets were seniors Rhett Peterson (145) and Jake Huston (152). Both ran into highly-ranked wrestlers from Dayton Christian in their Friday night matchups and will come back Saturday morning trying to wrestle for third place.

Bellevue had its only two state qualifiers reach Friday's semifinals.

But seniors Collin Adkins (138, 54-2) and Jared Hoy (285, 52-3) both were handed one-sided losses - 8-1 and 7-1, respectively - in the semifinals.



MATTHEW BERRY/GANNETT OHIO

Fremont Ross' Lamonte Chapman tries to pull away from Wadsworth's Noah Baughman during their Division I 120-pound championship match during the State High School Wrestling Individual Tournament on Saturday at the Schottenstein Center in Columbus.

Ross' Chapman takes second at tournament

DAN GILLES
CORRESPONDENT

COLUMBUS — If this year's State Wrestling Tournament is any indication of the future, Fremont Ross sophomore Lamonte Chapman's wrestling future over the next two years will be a bright one.

Chapman surprised most of the state wrestling experts by going 3-0 Thursday and Friday to punch his ticket to the Division I 120-pound state championship match. However, the Cinderella run struck midnight Saturday night at Value City Arena, when Wadsworth senior Noah Baughman handed him a 16-5 major decision loss.

Chapman (36-7) was attempting to become the second Fremont Ross state champion and the first one since Jim Mooney won it back in 1960. Instead, he became the fifth state runner-up and the first one since Trey Grine accomplished the feat in 2014.

"I know I need to put in more work in the wrestling room," Chapman said. "I want to try to get more of my teammates here and just wrestle harder.

"Noah was way stronger ... phenomenal ... nice

counterattacks, he has nice inside control."

Baughman (40-1) became a two-time state champion, winning his first title since his sophomore year after taking third here last season.

"It was definitely not as easy as it looked," he said. "He's a tough guy. The whole road is rugged, you know. I think our styles clashed a little bit, but once I got my motor rolling and started wrestling, I just did what I do best."

Baughman opened the match with a single-leg take-down and set the tone for his dominating performance. All of Chapman's points were scored on escapes.

"We're very, very proud of him," second-year Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "We think he represented Fremont to the fullest this weekend. He just kept riding it and riding it. Unfortunately, we ran into a returning state champ. Now we know what we need to go and work on and continue to build from this success and accomplishment that he made."

Minutes before the match, all the wrestlers are

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Chapman

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led out of the tunnel for the parade of champions in a darkened arena with some pyro. Chapman had seen it before as a fan, but to experience it as a

contender was a whole new animal.

"It was amazing," Chapman said.

Chapman isn't ready for the ride to end. With two more years of wrestling at Ross, he wants more chances to earn that elusive title.

"I know that anything's possible, all

you've got to do is believe," he said. "Coming from a district qualifier to a state runner-up is amazing. I didn't really like being just a district qualifier last year, so I worked hard during the summer to get better. I want to beat all of Trey Grine's records before I'm done."