

Giant OVAC Mat Tourney to Unfold at Moundsville

Bigger and better than ever. That's the outlook for the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference wrestling tournament, premier event on the local calendar for the schoolboy matmen and one of the largest high school grappling carnivals held anywhere.

Virtually 300 contestants representing 24 high schools, will be on the scene when the two-day, marathon meet gets underway on Friday at 1 p.m. at Moundsville Fieldhouse.

Two rounds of tourney action are scheduled for the afternoon session tomorrow, with four mats being used simultaneously. Quarter-finals will be at 8 p.m. on Friday with semi-finals on Saturday afternoon at 1, followed by consolation bouts. Both championship contests and consolation finals will be on Saturday night, starting at 8.

Host John-Marshall-High will appear in the role of defending champion and is rated as the team to beat by coach Bill Firegardner, who knows full well that this tournament is even tougher than the West Virginia state tourney, which his squad also won last year.

In addition to John Marshall, other former champions in the field are eight-time winner Martins Ferry, seven-time titlist Bridgeport, two-time kingpin, Bellaire, St. John's Central, and 1970 winner Wheeling Central.

However, it appears likely,

competition for team laurels could come from Warwood, Steubenville and Weirton, with Barnesville as a possible dark horse.

Other teams entered are Union Local, Oak Glen, Brooke, Bellaire, Buckeye North, Wintersville, Wheeling, River, Triadelphia, Beallsville, Mingo, Cadiz, Weirton Madonna and Jefferson Union.

John Marshall boasts 12 seeded entries while Barnesville has nine, Martins Ferry, Steubenville and Warwood eight each, Union Local seven, Oak Glen and Weirton six each, and Brooke and Linsly five apiece.

Top seeds are Kevin Felton, Brooke (13-0) at 98 pounds; Joe Kammer, Buckeye North (6-2) at 105; Dan Doyle, Wheeling Central (10-0) at 112; Chris Pryor, Weirton (13-0) at 119; Ed West, John Marshall (10-0) at 128; Dave Kosky, St. John's (5-1) at 132; Randy Bierce, J. Marshall (8-0-2) at 139; John Vdovjak, Warwood (14-0) at 145; Rick Spencer, Steubenville (6-1) at 155; Scott Lehasky, John Marshall (6-0-1) at 167; John Geary, Brooke (12-0) at 175; Eric Frankovich, Weirton (13-0) at 165; and George Kovalick Jr., Weirton (9-0), heavyweight.

Defending champions returning are Doyle, Vdovjak, and Spencer. Vdovjak, who won the West Virginia state title at 145 last year, has a two-season winning streak of 37 in a row.

obtained to work each day of the tourney. On Friday, the officiating will be done by George Nedeff, wrestling coach at WVU; Fred Pechek, wrestling coach at West Liberty State College; Walter Tolarchyk, coach at Hoover High at North Canton; Joe Dyser, Zanesville; and Frank Mossier, Waynesburg, Pa. On Saturday, Nedeff will be replaced by Jerry Tepaglia, of Burgettstown, Pa.

There will be trophies for the top three teams in the scoring. There will be individual awards for six place-winners in each weight class. The Dave Bierkorte Memorial Award, sponsored by the Wheeling Central Booster Club, will go to the outstanding wrestler in the tourney.

Weigh-ins will be from 10 a.m. until noon on Friday and Saturday, with a one-pound weight allowance permitted on Saturday. First and second round tourney pairings follow.

BARNESVILLE RUNNERUP

J. Marshall OVAC Mat Champ

The Monarchs of John Marshall again ruled supreme in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference wrestling tournament Saturday.

In the finals of the two-day journey at Moundsville Fieldhouse, Coach Bill Hinegardner's squad did not capture a single individual title but won team laurels for the second straight year.

John Marshall finished with 142½ points to 98 for runner-up Barnesville. Brooke was third, with 74½ points, just one more than Warwood, which finished only a point ahead of Weirton, with its 72½.

Staubenville was sixth in the 24-team field with 63 points, followed by St. John's Central 56½; Martins Ferry, 54½;

Union Local and Linsly Institute, 51 each; Oak Glen, 48; Wheeling Central, 46½; Wintersville, 28½; Beallsville, 25½; Wheeling, 25; Triadelphia and River, 23 each; Bellaire, 20; Buckeye North, 16½; Bridgeport, 13½; Jefferson Union, 11; Mingo, 7½; Weirton Madonna, 4½; and Cadiz, one.

Balance and depth paid off for John Marshall, which had runners-up in five weight classes.

The Dave Borkortle Memorial Award for the outstanding wrestler in the tourney went to Barnesville's rugged 175-pounder, Dan Claugus, who pinned his way through the event as he capped his performance by stopping the hosts' Mike Cain. Claugus is 14-1 on the season.

Barnesville had another filflist in Challen Stewart (12-2) who defeated champion Dan Doyle, of Wheeling Central, in the semi-finals and went on to take Jeff Felton, Brooke, in the finals. Doyle had won 11 straight.

Two grapplers won titles for the second straight year. Warwood's John Vodyjak, who is defending state champion, repeated in the 145-pound class as he scored five points in the last period to break a scoreless draw with Linsly's Doug Pell. Vodyjak has now captured 41 straight matches over two seasons and is 18-0 this season. The other repeat champ was Rick Spencer (10-1), of Staubenville, who pinned Barnesville's Bruce Eshler in the 155-pound windup.

Two finals went into overtime with Frank Hantosz, of St. John's, nipping Wintersville's Jim Mahlie, 1-0, for the 119-pound laurels and Ken Robinson, Brooke, getting a referee's decision over Keith Shalvey, Warwood, after they battled through three periods, plus the overtime, without either scoring.

First champ crowned was Brooke 98-pounder Kevin Felton, who is now unbeaten in 17 matches this year. His final win of the tourney was over

Rusty Mercer, J. Marshall, who has bowed to him three times this season but is otherwise unbeaten.

Linsly's Bob Mendenhall (14-3) topped Randy West, Barnesville, 6-4, for the 105-pound crown. Don Nipper (10-0) of Beallsville, handed Ed West, J. Marshall, his first loss in the 126 windup. West had won 13 in a row.

Dave Kosky, of St. John's, joined the ranks of the champs with a 6-1 verdict over Ron Griffin of JMHS, in the 130-

pound final. Martins Ferry's Ione Hifflist was Tom Suriano, at 167. Now 14-1 on the season. Suriano edged J. Marshall's Scott Lehasky, 2-1, on a riding time point.

Eric Frankovich (17-1) of Weirton, pinned Eric Brubaker, River, for the 185-pound laurels and Denny Haney, Warwood (15-3) became the champ heavyweight with a 3-2 nod over Oak Glen's Jim Woolfe, who had earlier edged top-seeded George Kovalick Jr., of Weirton.



Individual Champs in OVAC Mat Tourney

Individual champions were crowned in 13 weight classes Saturday night in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference's wrestling tournament at the Moundsville fieldhouse. On the bottom row (left to right) are Kevin Felton, Brooke, Bob Mendenhall, Linsly Institute; Challen Stewart, Barnesville; Frank Hollosz, St. John's Central; Don Nippert, Beallsville, and Dave Kosky, St. John's Central. Standing (left to right) are Ken Robinson, Brooke; John Vdovjak, Warwood;

Rick Spencer, Steubenville; Tom Suriano, Martins Ferry; Dave Glaugus, Barnesville; Eric Frankovitch, Weirton; and Denny Haney, Warwood. John Marshall repeated as the team champion, but the Monarchs did not have an individual winner.

(Photo By Cochran)