

# TheOpenMat's 2010 POWERade Preview

## 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Event Features History in the Making

Willie Saylor, Editor

When the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of The POWERade Tournament commences Wednesday, Franklin Regional's Nico Megaludis will be listed as one of fifteen 3x Champions. Upon its completion Thursday night, he could become just the third ever 4xer.

TOM's #1-ranked 125lber, Nico has enjoyed a fabulous prep career. The Penn State commitment has a career record of 125-1, and two PA state titles. His only loss in high school came as a 103lb freshman to senior, and, eventual state champion, Mark Rappo, 1-0 in state semifinals.

He looks to join North Allegheny's Ty Moore, largely considered one of the top high school wrestlers of the modern era, and Marshall Peppelman of Central Dauphin, as the only wrestlers to win POWERade each of their high school years.

Junior Jimmy Gulibon is 2-for-2 in the POWERade. He's defeated Blue Mountain's Cory Keener both times in finals; two years ago at 103 and last year at 112. To maintain his four-title pace, he'll have to get through a bracket that includes both Keener and Christiansburg's Joey Dance, who gave him fits in their Ironman semifinal.

Another wrestler could take the next step in the same direction. Last year, Cody Weircioch, then a 152lb freshman, defeated reigning Ohio State Champion, Pierce Harger, to win a POWERade title. Now ranked as our #2 160lber, Weircioch will be part of what might be the most competitive bracket in this year's field.

In anticipation of what is sure to be another fine POWERade competition, I'll handicap each weight class and identify the contenders in TheOpenMat's official 2010 POWERade Preview. Wrestlers will be listed with their seed and TOM rank (if applicable).

### **103**

2009 Final: Tyson Dippery, Central Dauphin, dec. Connor Schram, Canon-Mac, 3-2

2005 Final: Ian Squires, Christiansburg, wbf. Alex Weaver, Moeller, 4:59

#### The Contenders (w/seeds-and TOM National Rank):

1-Justin Riggs, Huntington WV

2-Brandon Thompson, Solon OH

3-Colt Shorts, Canon-McMillan

4-Tommy Aloj, Forest Park VA

5-Jeremy Schwartz, CD

6-Anthony Tutolo, Walsh OH

7-#20Sean Russell, Collins Hill GA

8-Rich Verebe, LaSalle

Bryce Gentry, Colonial Forge VA

#### Notes:

After CM's Dalton Macri placed at both Fargo and the Super32, he found his name in TOM's national rankings. But now he finds himself on the outside looking in as he was beaten out in wrestle-offs by Colt Shorts.

By extension, you could assume that Shorts is pretty darn tough. Two weeks ago he reached the North Canton Holiday finals where he lost to the top seed here, Justin Riggs, a West Virginia state champion.

The lone ranked wrestler at 103 is Collins Hill's Sean Russell, who performed well at both the Cougar Invitational and the Kansas City Classic, where his only loss was a narrow, double-overtime decision to this year's Fargo Cadet Champion.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Russell 2. Riggs 3. Shorts*

## **112**

2009 Final: Jimmy Gulibon, Derry, dec. Cory Keener, Blue Mtn., 9-2

2005 Final: Colin Johnston, Canon McMillan dec Tony Dallago, Central Dauphin 6-1

### **The Contenders:**

1-#2Conner Schram, Canon-MacMillan

2-#11J.R. Wert, Christiansburg VA

3-HM Chris Vasser, Cedar Cliff

4-Jarrett Simpkins, Ripley WV

5-Cory Stainbrook, Walsh OH

6-Willie Bohince, Penn-Trafford

7-Michael Hayes, Colonial Forge VA

8-HM Drew Furgeson-Mitchell, Collins Hill GA

Chace Small, Latrobe

Notes:

This is a great field this year, with the bracket featuring two NHSCA Champs and a PA State Champ.

Conner Schram is your top seed. He was last year's POWERade Runner-Up at 103 and the AAA State Champ.

The second seed, Wert, comes back to his home state after riding a wave of recent success. He was the Fr. National Champ at NHSCA's, and placed highly at both the Ironman and the Beast.

Ferguson-Mitchell is also an NHSCA Champ, winning the Soph. Division at 103lbs. Most recently, he placed 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Kansas City Classic.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Schram 2. Wert 3. Vassar*

**119**

2009 Final: Nico Megaludis, Franklin, dec. Mike Rhone, Benton, 2-1 RO

2005 Final: Troy Dolan, Derry dec Walker Faison, Cox 5-3

The Contenders:

1-#1 Jimmy Gulibon, Derry

2-#17 Corey Keener, Blue Mtn.

3-#5 Joey Dance, Christiansburg VA

4-Derrick Nelson, Waynesburg

5-Dennis Gustafson, Forest Park VA

6-Paul Bewak, Hempfield

7-Ethan Kenney, Connellsville

8-Josh Canterbury, Huntington WV

DeMarquis Holley, Dieruff

Eric Friedman, St. Paul's MD

Michael Kostandaras, Walsh OH

Josh Polacek, Westmont-Hilltop

Notes:

Gulibon has just one career legitimate loss (and another on an illegal slam). With two POWERade and two state titles, he's the man to beat here as the top seed.

But he'll certainly have to earn it. He's likely to see familiar foe Keener, or Joey Dance in the finals. Gulibon has beaten Keener for the last two POWERade titles, and for the state title in last year's AAA finals.

Dance, who was the Beast of the East Runner-Up last week, wrestled Gulibon to a close, overtime match at the Ironman a few weeks ago.

A Dance-Keener semifinal will be one of this year's POWERade's premier pre-final bouts.

Watch out for Gustafson, an NHSCA Champ and Beast placer.

Dieruff's DeMarquis Holley, a placer in Gustafson's NHSCA bracket, has also been wrestling well.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Gulibon 2. Dance 3. Keener*

**125**

2009 Final: Mitchell Port, Bellefonte, md. Dave Makara, Burrell, 10-2

2005 Final: Grant Lowther, Trinity dec. Quentin Keyes, Walsh Jesuit 8-6

The Contenders:

1-#1Nico Megaludis, Franklin

2-#8Geoff Alexander, Shady Side

3-Tyson Dippery, Central Dauphin

4-Tim Locksmith, Osceola FL

5-Zach McGinness, Waynesburg

6-Tom Traxler, Bellefonte

7-Colt Cotton, Benton

8-Bazell Partridge, Collins Hill GA

Travis Kushner, Westmont-Hilltop

Notes:

The biggest threat to Megaludis being denied entrance to the 4x POWERade fraternity is Shady Side's Geoff Alexander, who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> at last year's state tournament and recently won the Super32 by dispatching three nationally ranked wrestlers in his last three bouts.

Cotton was last week's King of the Mountain Runner-Up

Locksmith is a Florida State Champ and placed here last year.

Dippery, last year's 103lb champ, had a phenomenal Beast tournament last week in a 3<sup>rd</sup> place showing.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Megaludis 2. Alexander 3. Dippery*

## **130**

2009 Final: Frank Martellotti, Shady Side, dec. Tyler Rauenzahn, Blue Mtn., 10-4

2005 Final: Chase Skonieczny, Walsh Jesuit dec Collin Dozier, Cox 6-5

### The Contenders:

1-#6Johnni DiJulius, Walsh OH

2-HM Dave Makara, Burrell

3-Coltin Fought, Benton

4-Brandon Choate, Blue Mtn.

5-Anthony Collica, Solon OH

6-Justin Arthur, Huntington WV

7-Spencer Rickman, Collins Hill GA

8-Anthony Elias, Shady Side

#10Solomon Chisko, Canon-McMillan

Shyheim Brown, Central Dauphin

### Notes:

Anthony Elias made some waves at Ironman when he sent freshman phenom, Jack Clark, to the loser's bracket in an opening round.

The quarterfinals here will offer Elias an even taller task as he'll draw #6 DiJulius, a two-time Ohio State Champion and Buckeye signee.

The X-factor at 130 will come in the form of freshman phenom Solomon Chisko, who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> at Super32 and posted a win over the reigning Fargo Junior Nationals Champion. Where Chisko gets placed in the bracket will have a most profound impact on the rest of the field as he is a serious threat to win.

Fought and Choate, both long-time performers at high-level events, and both state runners-up, are coming off disastrous tournaments. Choate failed to place at the Ironman, while Fought was upset in an early round at King of the Mountain, but battled back for 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Expect them to rebound here and turn in good performances.

Choate would have DiJulius in semi's, while Fought could draw Ironman placer Makara.

*TOM's Picks: 1. DiJulius 2. Chisko 3. Choate*

## **135**

2009 Final: Travis Shaffer, Derry, dec. Joe Locksmith, Osceola, 3-2

2005 Final: Kory Bissett, West Greene dec Steve Bosak, State College 5-3

### **The Contenders:**

1-#3Nate Skonieczny, Walsh OH

2-#15Ty Lydic, Latrobe

3-Joey Mazzi, LaSalle

4-Tanner Hough, Westmont-Hilltop

5-Brandon Pesarchik, Shamokin

6-Jacob Kingett, Forest Park VA

7-Nick Varndell, Central Dauphin

8-Joe Doyague, Collins Hill GA

Leo Wortman, Bellefonte

Jeremy Landowski, Burrell

Dario Dobbin, Canon-McMillan

Notes:

This weight, while displaying a good balance, appears to be a two-horse race with Skonieczny and Lydic your clear leaders.

Skonieczny is an Ohio State Champ and placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in a brutal weight class at Super32.

Lydic, long on the precipice of national acclaim, is coming off a signature win. He beat former #1 Steve Spearman in the King of the Mountain finals.

By comparison, Skonieczny also defeated Spearman in Ironman quarterfinals.

Watch out for LaSalle's Joey Mazzi, who was 5<sup>th</sup> at the Beast, and Landowski who had a great run at Ironman.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Lydic 2. Skonieczny 3. Landowski*

**140**

2009 Final: Josh Kinding, Blue Mtn. md. Pete Baldwin, Osceola, 12-1

2005 Final: Ashtin Primus, Connellsville dec Nick Nelson, Shaler 7-4

The Contenders:

1-HM Travis Shaffer, Derry

2-#2 Evan Henderson, Kiski

3-HM Matt Cimato, LaSalle

4-#11 Dan Neff, Solanco

5-Pete Galli, St Pauls MD

6-Tanner Sutton, Chartiers-Houston

7-Chris Little, Franklin

8-Tyler Manion, Pitt CC

Kevin Gooding, Central Dauphin

Logan Bosely, Christiansburg

### Notes:

As far as Top4 go, this might be the best this POWERade has to offer. Just a great crop of talent at the top.

Shaffer, a three-time state placer and the inaugural FloNational's Champ, had a terrible start to the season. He was pinned twice at the Ironman, failed to place, and subsequently dropped out of the rankings. He's down a weight, and has his shot here to prove Ironman was an anomaly.

Shaffer will have a tough road though. He's looking at a semi's match-up with the winner of Pete Galli, a National Prep and Beast placer, and Dan Neff, who was 3<sup>rd</sup> in PIAA AAA last year, and who was a runner-up at Super32.

#2Henderson and Cimato looked destined to meet up in the semi's of the bottom half. It will be their third meeting in two weeks as they wrestled twice at the Beast, Henderson winning 6-4, and 3-1.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Henderson 2. Neff 3. Shaffer*

## **145**

2009 Final: Gabe Byrd, Osceola, dec. Jesse Swink, Connelsville, 4-2 OT

2005 Final: Bubba Jenkins, Cox mdec Zach Lundgren, DuBois 15-7

### The Contenders:

1-#9Pete Baldwin, Osceola FL

2-Jesse Swink, Connellsville

3-#14Nick Catalano, Canon-McMillan

4-#18Robert Henderson, Kiski

5-Zach Epperly, Christiansburg VA

6-Mike Innes, Chartiers-Houston

7-David Demor, SS Beaver

8-Eric Nutter, PCC

Garrett Peppelman, Central Dauphin

Nate Alterio, Bellefonte

Cole Harkins, Burrell

Brady Massaro, Mt. St. Joes MD

### Notes:

Jesse Swink was one of the pleasant surprises at this year's Beast, placing 6<sup>th</sup> and beating Epperly and nationally ranked Henry Carlson in the process. Unfortunately, his road is just as formidable here, maybe more so.

He draws Dave Demor in quarters and a possible match with PA AAA 3<sup>rd</sup> placer, Catalano in semi's.

Talk about tough roads; Robert Henderson, a runner-up at Ironman and 4<sup>th</sup> at the Beast, will have to go through Epperly to set up a ¼ with defending runner-up Baldwin, who was also a Super32 placer and FloNats Runner-Up.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Catalano 2. Henderson 3. Baldwin*

## 152

2009 Final: Cody Weircioch, Charleroi, dec. Pierce Harger, Moeller, 2-1

2005 Final: Brian Letters, Fox Chapel dec Curtis Branchen, Avonworth 4-1

### The Contenders:

1-HM Lorenzo Thomas, Pitt CC

2-Casey Kent, LaSalle

3-Ben Johnson, Franklin

4-Lucas Rider, Forest Park VA

5-James Linkous, Christiansburg VA

6-Brad Mutchnick, St. Pauls MD

7-Zach Martinez, Colonial Forge VA

8-Alex Teagarden, Waynesburg

#3Chance Marsteller, Kennard-Dale

### Notes:

We've waited a long time for this: Chance Marsteller's national-level competition in high school. As a junior high student, he's competed most everywhere, winning a Fargo title this summer. As a freshman, he's unseeded. Like Chisko at 130, where Chance is placed in the bracket directly impacts the rest of the field.

What we do know is that Thomas, a PIAA AAA Runner-Up, is your top seed. He rebounded nicely from a DNP performance at the Ironman by winning the Beast with wins over several ranked wrestlers.

The 2Seed is Kent, a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the state tournament a year ago, and who was 5<sup>th</sup> at last week's Beast.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Marsteller 2. Thomas 3. Kent*

## **160**

2009 Final: Marshall Peppelman, CD, dec. Eric Hess, Benton, 4-2

2005 Final: Mack Lewnes, Mt. St. Joseph dec Dave Rella, Walsh Jesuit 4-3

### The Contenders:

1-#2Cody Weircioch, Charleroi

2-#4Jason Luster, Pitt CC

3-#12Travis McKillop, Burrell

4-Scott Reilly, Colonial Forge VA

5-Shane Springer, LaSalle

6-Aaron McKinney, West Allegheny

7-Rich Eva, Christiansburg VA

8-Adam Bicak, Ripley WV

Garrett Vulcano, Chartiers-Houston

Angelo Bortoluzzi, Kiski

### Notes:

Last year at this time, most avid wrestling fans had just seen Jason Luster taking Dylan Alton to the wire at the Ironman, and dubbing him the next big thing. Well, after winning National Preps,

placing high at Super32 up a weight, and winning both the Ironman and Beast, he *is* the big thing.

The only problem is, Luster is wrestling relatively uninspired and posted close decisions when we thought he'd be dominant. He better be inspired this week. To get to the finals he'll have to get past #12 McKillop who was, in my opinion, one of the most improved wrestlers, technically, at the Ironman.

The top seed and likely finalist from the top half, is defending champ, Weircioch. After a year in which he won the POWERade and became PA's heaviest freshman state champion in history, Weircioch legitimized his status among the nation's elite by winning the Super32 and defeating then-#1 Taylor Massa.

And remember, McKillop gave Weircioch his only HS loss last year.

Scott Reilly and Shane Springer will renew acquaintances here. They wrestled twice at the Beast with Reilly winning both, 6-4, and 6-3 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place bout.

Watch out for Bortoluzzi. He lost a 3-2 bout to Luster in Beast semi's and had him on the ropes.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Weircioch 2. Luster 3. McKillop*

## **171**

2009 Final: Kenny Courts, CD, dec. Matt Cunningham, Shady Side, 4-2

2005 Final: Eric Cameron, Moeller dec Nathan Murin, Trinity 11-6

### **The Contenders:**

1-Nick Bonnacorsi, Bethel Park

2-Nick Burns, LaSalle

3-Dakota DesLauriers, Burrell

4-Tyler Rill, Mt. St. Joes MD

5-Jacob Lawry, Albert Gallatin

6-Conner Moran, Solanco

7-Grant Dickey, Cedar Cliff

8-Brad Grieb, Bellafonte

Notes:

Maybe the thinnest weight here, but with a load of state placers with potential and possibly stars-to-be.

Let's start with Bonnacorsi, who despite not placing at the state tournament last season, has considerable talent. He had the misfortune of hitting #1-ranked Marshall Peppelman and nationally ranked John Staudenmayer in that tournament. He's your top seed and clear favorite here.

DesLauriers, a state placer as a freshman, wrestled well at the Ironman.

Grant Dickey is a seasoned vet.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Bonnacorsi 2. DesLauriers 3. Dickey*

**189**

2009 Final: Jamie Callendar, CRN, dec. Mike Pollard, Corry, 9-4

2005 Final: Thomas Shovlin, Central Dauphin dec Garrett Hunter, McGuffey 1-0

The Contenders:

1-#4Kenny Courts, Central Dauphin

2-Nikos Garofola, Hempfield

3-HM Perry Hills, Pitt CC

4-Mac Bennett, Collins Hill GA

5-Ryan Burnheimer, Westmont-Hilltop

6-David Reck, Colonial Forge VA

7-Anthony Melchiorre, Walsh OH

8-Jay Taylor, Burrell

Scott Mohring, Latrobe

### Notes:

Kenny Courts, who's been dominant since his career began three years ago, suddenly looks mortal. There was something visibly wrong with him at the Beast, where he had to settle for 5<sup>th</sup>. Be it injury, or sickness, or something else all together, he's clearly not clicking on all cylinders.

That being said, Hills, who beat Courts in Beast wrestlebacks, is performing extremely well; he's perhaps the most improved on Sunny Abe's PCC squad.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Hills 2. Courts 3. Burnheimer*

## **215**

2009 Final: Nate Gaffney, Connelsville, wbf. Cody Klempay, CM, 3:41

2005 Final: Cody Gardner, Christiansburg fall Jake Kurant, Greensburg Salem 2:45

### The Contenders:

1-Brian Beattie, Burrell PA

2-Kyle McWreath, Trinity PA

3-Nick Holbert, Collins Hill GA

4-Dante Nania, Hempfield PA

5-Colyn Cook, Kiski PA

6-Tyler Tippett, Mt. St. Joes MD

7-David Hicks, Ripley WV

8-Zak Koller, Central Dauphin PA

Zach Deluca, Pitt CC

### Notes:

While this weight lacks top-flight studs, it does have depth with a good amount of solid competitors.

This is the year for Beattie to take his game to the next level. A staple in the Burrell line-up and at the state tournament, Beattie wrestled well at the Ironman. I like that trend to continue here.

McWreath, a triple-A semifinalist last year, is the top seed in the bottom half. He recently placed 5<sup>th</sup> at the KC Classic.

Also watch out for Tyler Tippett, who despite being a round away from placing at the Beast, has the potential to go with any of these guys.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Beattie 2. Holbert 3. Tippett*

### **HWT**

2009 Final: Ty DeMott, Benton, dec. Karl Green, Mt. St. Joes, 4-2 OT

2005 Final: Ryan Tomei, Penn Trafford dec Frank Becker, Moeller 6-1

The Contenders:

1-Cody Klempay, Canon-McMillan PA

2-Josh Duplin, Westmont-Hilltop PA

3-Wes Tillett, Shamokin PA

4-Marquis Porterfield, Christiansburg VA

5-James Vawter, Forest Park VA

6-Nate Grandelis, Chartiers-Houston PA

7-Luke Fleck, Franklin PA

8-Daryl Hicks, Ripley WV

Notes:

Pennsylvania experienced an inordinate amount of talent blossoming up through the upper-weights last year. The depth at the state tournament amongst the big boys was quite unprecedented. This is one reason why you didn't see Cody Klempay, who posted four falls and a major in his NC Holiday tournament title run, in Hershey last year. He's your top seed here.

Josh Duplin did make it to Hershey last year and had a great run. He was bounced from the top-side by the narrowest of margins, losing an overtime-rideout bout to eventual champion John Rizzo.

Wes Tillett, another state qualifier, was a match from placing both at last year's state tournament and last week at the Beast.

*TOM's Picks: 1. Klempay 2. Duplin 3. Tillett*

### **Team Race:**

There are three teams that appear in TOM's Honorable Mention list (representing teams 21-30) at this year's POWERade. Both Pittsburgh Central Catholic and Canon-McMillan from western PA, and Christiansburg, VA.

In their last competitions, both tournaments, Cannon-Mac took second at the North Canton Holiday Tournament (to Wadsworth) while PCC and Christiansburg went 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

I like those three teams to grab top honors here. And while I would prefer Cannon-Mac's line-up balance in duals, I like the high-end talent from both PCC and CBurg to trump that here.

*TOM's Team Picks: 1. Pitt CC 2. Christiansburg 3. Cannon-Mac*

\*Wrestling gets started at 8:30 AM on Wednesday. Check in for our Day I update Thursday morning, and visit the tournament's homesite at: <http://poweradewrestling.com/>