



WRESTLING | EDISON



Register photos/ERIN CALDWELL

ABOVE: Edison senior Casey Barnett is the top-ranked wrestler at 138 pounds in Division III. He's trying to become the Chargers' first two-time state champion. **BELOW:** Barnett celebrates with his dad, Tom, an assistant coach, after winning the 106-pound state title as a freshman.

Barnett back for more

Edison senior wrestling for shot at second state title

By JIMMY WATKINS

sports@sanduskyregister.com

MILAN

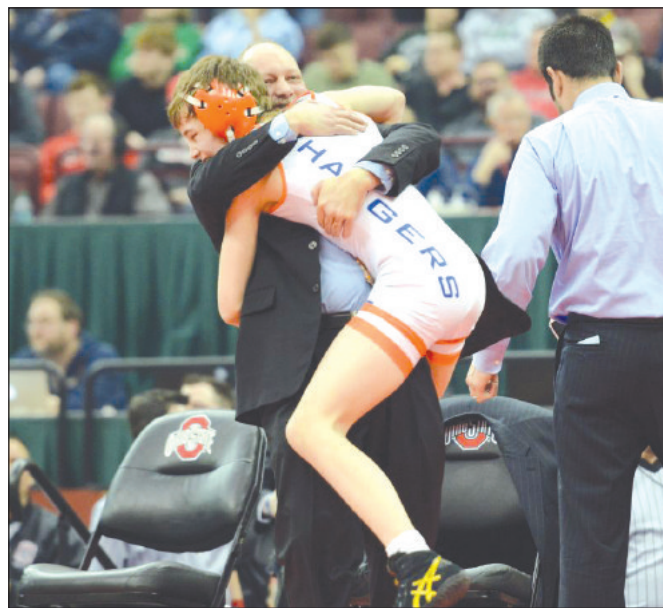
On March 12, 2020, Edison wrestling coach Davy Hermes assembled his 10 state qualifiers in the hallway of their hotel. Hermes had bad news: The state tournament had been postponed. Eventually, it would be canceled.

Last year was supposed to belong to Edison. More specifically, to Casey Barnett. The Chargers arrived in Columbus feeling like favorites in a few weight classes, but nobody inspired more confidence than Barnett.

After winning a state title as a freshman, Barnett had, in his own words "taken his foot off the gas" as a sophomore. He finished fifth, and he hadn't stopped thinking about it since.

During that hallway meeting, however, Barnett's dreams for redemption evaporated. Just like that, he'd have to wait another year.

Almost one year later, Edison is one step closer to returning to the state tournament. The Chargers, who will compete in this weekend's Division III district at Rossford, are again considered among the



favorites to take home this year's state title after repeating as state duals champion and crowning nine sectional champions and seven Sandusky Bay Conference champs at the Bay/River Division hybrid tourney.

At each stop, Barnett adds another record. He broke Edison's all-time wins record Jan 30. He broke the state pins record at state duals. And he joined an exclusive group of

"less than 10" wrestlers when he won his fourth SBC title on February 9.

Records are nice, but titles last forever, and Barnett wants his back. That's why he answers each question about the latest record with the goal in mind.

"At the end of the day, I'm trying to go 12-0 (in the postseason)," Barnett said. "I need to get back onto the podium at state."

Rolling around

Casey Barnett attended his first state tournament when he was just two weeks old. His father, Tom, coached at Willard then, and from the moment his children were born they never strayed far from the mat.

Brady Barnett, Casey's older brother by four years, embraced the sport right away. He asked Tom to wrestle matches at 3 years old. Casey, on the other hand, required a gentle nudge. Casey joined Willard's biddy program when he was 5. He didn't mind practices, but he dreaded matches.

"Do I have to wrestle?" Casey would ask.

"Yep," Tom would reply. "If your brother's wrestling, you're wrestling."

When Brady wrestled, the result mattered. Losses moved Brady to tears. Casey, on the other hand, kept a straight face no matter his result. "He just wanted to have fun," Brady said.

At age 8, Casey started winning, which he quickly realized was the more fun outcome. When he failed to qualify for his first Ohio Athletic Committee state tournament, he asked Tom to enter him in another bracket. Tom refused. Casey would earn one chance in high school, so he'd earn once chance then, too.

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COLL. BASKETBALL | OSU

Slumping Buckeyes look for answers

By The Associated Press

COLUMBUS

No. 7 Ohio State is searching for answers to its perplexing February fade as No. 4 Illinois comes to town for the regular-season finale Saturday ahead of what promises to be an arduous Big Ten tournament.

Postseason success in college basketball is all about peaking in March, which is why the three-game losing streak to close out February was so alarming for coach Chris Holtmann and the Buckeyes.

Ohio State had won seven straight and got to No. 4 in the AP Top 25 before losing three games in eight days, two of them to Top 10 teams. The Buckeyes played well for stretches but couldn't finish any of them with momentum.

■ See **BUCKEYES**, Page B4

TNS photo

Ohio State's E.J. Liddell pulls up for shot against Indiana's Race Thompson during a game in Columbus on February 13.

NFL | BROWNS

Berry likes Mayfield's 'maturation'

By The Associated Press

CLEVELAND

The Browns won't be chasing a quarterback in free agency. They aren't stressing over which one to take in the NFL draft or looking to make a trade.

For once, they appear to be set at QB.

Baker Mayfield has brought wins, change and calm to Cleveland.

Coming off a solid third season and playoff appearance, Mayfield has brought much-needed comfort to the Browns, who entered 2020 still unsure if the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2018 was the answer but now feel confident they've got their guy.

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DIVISION IV | DISTRICT FINAL

St. Paul falls by 1 point to Lucas

By MARK HAZELWOOD

Tandem Media Network

WILLARD

Every possession matters. Often viewed as cliché in coaching circles, that statement rang true for the St. Paul boys basketball team in Friday's Division IV district championship game vs. Lucas at Willard High School.

The Flyers led throughout the fourth quarter, and still led by a point with under 20 seconds remaining. But the Cubs' Ethan Wallace scored inside with a tough shot over two defenders with 18 seconds left, then he and his teammates turned away the Flyers twice to hold on for a 38-37 win inside Robert L. Haas Gymnasium.

St. Paul saw its season and eight-game winning

streak come to a close at 17-6 overall. The Cubs (19-7) will play Warren JFK in a Division IV regional semifinal at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at Akron Firestone High School.

"We had chances, and every possession matters," St. Paul coach Mike Smith said. "It doesn't matter if it's the first or fourth quarter, but obviously it gets magnified at the end of the game. And we didn't make the last play. It's that simple."

"Give credit to Lucas, they did a nice job," he added. "I thought both teams defended really well. It was a great basketball game, and unfortunately it ended with six seniors who we don't get to go to practice with tomorrow — and that's going to sting."

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Register photo/ERIN CALDWELL

St. Paul's Nate Winslow reacts to the team's loss to Lucas in a Division IV district final game at Willard High School on Friday.

DIVISION II | DISTRICT FINAL

Truckers are underdogs in rematch with Shelby

By MARK HAZELWOOD

Tandem Media Network

ASHLAND

There are no illusions. The Norwalk boys basketball team is the underdog entering Saturday's Division II district championship game against Shelby at Ashland High School.

At 19-3, the Whippets have the better record than the Truckers (17-8). Shelby was voted the top seed in the district, while Norwalk was seeded third.

And just 34 days ago, the Whippets came into Norwalk and left with a 59-42 non-league victory.

"It's going to be a tough game," Norwalk junior guard Kyler Kromer said. "I don't think we played our best, but they have two great scorers in (Cody) Lantz and (TJ)

Pugh. It's going to be tough to stop them."

The Whippets average 69.5 points per game. Known for their defense, the Truckers held them to nearly 11 points below that average in the game in Norwalk, but it was the offense that hurt them.

In the loss, Norwalk had four stretches in the first half that totaled 10:29 of the 16 minutes without scoring as it faced a 35-26 halftime deficit.

Offensively, aside from one basket from Caleb Sommers, Norwalk had just three players score. The Truckers were 0-of-8 shooting from the 3-point line while they finished just 17-of-45 (38 percent) overall from the floor.

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