

The Next Generation 1988-89 to 2000-01

Mike Capozzoli was hired as the Newport head coach for the 1988-89 season. He has been in the position since then - by far the longest serving coach in Newport wrestling history. Coach Capozzoli wrestled for Mount Lebanon High School south of Pittsburgh (Class of 1983) and then for the University of Pittsburgh (Class of 1988). At Mt. Lebanon Coach Capozzoli was a varsity performer with a 28-9 record his senior year when he placed fourth in the WPIAL tournament, but fell 9-7 in his first match at states to a three-time state finalist and one-time champ from District 11. He was a varsity letterman at Pitt.

Coach Capozzoli's tenure has been divided into three period: the next generation (1988-89 through 2000-01); the fourth tier (2001-02 through 2015-16); and the fifth dimension (2015-16 through the present). Only limited team success was achieved until later in the next generation years, but individual achievements were apparent almost from the beginning and became great. In addition to a state runner-up in 1992 (Steve Gettins), two state champs were crowned (Damian Jones in 1993 and Adam Smith in 2001). Although not the first sons of former Newport wrestlers to be on the team, Damian and Adam were the first next generation of Newport wrestlers to achieve extreme success - not only winning state titles but both finishing with three state medals.

The records used for the annual and other statistics for this time period were the annual team records maintained in the Newport High School library, the school yearbook (the Blunita), tournament programs, Newport holiday tournament records, the Off the Mat publication, newspaper and internet research, reporter John Alvanitakis' archives and a wrestler's scrapbook. The library records for the 1988-89 and 1889-90 seasons follow the same format that had been used since 1973-74. The library records for the 1990-91 season through the 1998-99 season follow a different format with a bit less information.

Detailed dual meet records and statistics have been garnered from boxscores included in a wrestler's scrapbook for the 1987-88 season. Otherwise, none of the initial sources available include dual meet records or the number of falls. The collection of season records maintained in the school library ends with the 1998-99 season. News-Sun season wrap ups for the 1997-98, 1999-2000 and 2000-01 seasons include substantial helpful information. John Alvanitakis' did the Newport wrap-ups in 1998 and 2001 and Dustin Hockensmith did the Newport one in 2000. The 1997-98 season in review was the first published. Individual dual meet records for the 1997-98 season, boxscores for 13 of the 15 dual meets in 1999-2000 and some missing team dual meet scores for the 2000-01 season were found in archive records of John Alvanitakis.

1988-89 through 1992-93

The next generation period started with a major change to the weight classifications. The long history of twelve weight classes, with one under 100 pounds, came to an end for the

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1988-89 season. The new thirteen weight classes were: 103, 112, 119, 125, 130, 135, 140, 145, 152, 160, 171, 189 and 275. A PIAA rule allowing schools to combine for sports had also passed some years before and Newport's first documented varsity wrestler from Greenwood (Aubrey Sembrau) appears in the records of the 1992-93 season. In addition to wrestling, the Newport-Greenwood cooperative program includes football, boys soccer, cross-country and track and field.

There was a change in facility usage during the 1988-89 season. The wrestling room, which had been located in the auxiliary gym across the hall from the regular gym, was moved to a metal storage building behind the cafeteria. That building had been used as a storage shed since 1979. Water, sewage and heating was added to convert it to a wrestling room. Prior to 1973 the auxiliary gym was used for shop classes. It continued to be used as a weight room for some time after the new wrestling room was established. The new room provided the grapplers with more space and better ventilation; and was used for varsity, junior varsity and junior high practices. This facility was used through the 2005-06 season.

The team's dual meet records during the first five-years of the next generation period were 8-10 (1988-89); 12-10 (1989-90); 8-12 (1990-91); 11-10 (1991-92); and 8-12 (1992-93). Line Mountain, Upper Dauphin, Juniata and West Snyder were all strong in the Tri-Valley League. Newport had records of 4-4 in 1988-89, 1989-90, 1991-92; and 3-5 in 1990-91 and 1992-93, when Middleburg also bested Newport.

Fellow Tri-Valley League team Line Mountain was a presence on the state scene throughout the 1990s, winning the AA individual state tournament team title in 1990, 1994, 1996 and 1997; and taking a second place in 1995 and third in 1989. And both Upper Dauphin and Juniata were presences in the District 3/south central region individual and team tournaments. Upper Dauphin won AA individual district/region tournament titles in 1990 and 1991, as well as taking third place in 1995. They were also runner-up in the District 3 team tournament in 1990 and 1991. Juniata, after three top-four finishes during the 1980s, stood fourth in 1992 and third in the 2001 district/region individual tournament. They were also runner-up in the 2000 District 3 team tournament.

Jamie Hildebrand led the Buffaloes in dual meet team points (70) and dual meet falls (9) during the 1988-89 season. His dual meet record was 14-2-0. Dave Jones was second in team points (58), with a record of 15-2-1. Chris Davis was third with 45 team points and a dual meet record of 13-3-3; and Steve Herr fourth with 39 team points and a dual record of 12-4.

Team success was had in some tournaments. Newport was team champion of their holiday tournament in 1988-89 and runner-up in 1989-90. The team was second at sections in 1988-89 and third in 1989-90. And in 1991-92 Newport placed sixth in the District 3/south central region tournament; its second top-ten finish since official scoring started in 1981.

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Some schools in the Tri-Valley League ceased having junior varsity teams during this time period and starting in 1988-89 the league normally noted in their junior varsity standings situations where there was no match. These records reflect that Newport did not have junior varsity league matches in 1991-92. At times during this period Newport had both junior varsity and junior high matches before the varsity event. Newport's intramural elementary tournament was still being held at least as late as the 1989-90 season, when the News-Sun reported that 63 boys were participating in the event.

A new team event started during this time period when schools began hosting dual meet tournaments. Two of the first in the Harrisburg area were the Cedar Cliff Duals and the Chocolatetown Duals held at Milton Hershey, both starting during the 1988-89 season. Newport participated in the second annual Chocolatetown Duals during the 1989-90 season, as well as the following season, taking fourth place out of eight teams in each event. District 3 started its dual meet tournament in 1989-90. Some other districts had started having team tournaments earlier in the 1980s. The state team tournament did not get off the ground until 1998-99. The Perry County team tournament began during the 1990-91 season.

Individual success in the postseason occurred in everyone of the seasons from 1988-89 through 1992-93, with Newport wrestlers coming to the forefront at the district/region tournament as well as at states. In 1989 there were two section champs (Jamie Hilderandt and Dave Jones) to go along with three runner-ups and three third-place medal winners. Jamie went on to take fourth place at districts/regions, just missing a trip to states.

Three-year starters Dave Jones and Chris Davis both graduated in 1989. Both struggled their sophomore years, but had successful junior and senior campaigns. Dave finished with an overall record of 58-26-1, going 43-13-1 his final two years (22-5-1 as a senior). He was a section champion his senior year, with two prior third-place finishes. Chris graduated with an over all record of 44-35-2, including 35-14-1 his last two years (19-6-1 as a senior). He was a Newport tournament champion his senior year with runner-up and third-place section medals to his credit.

1990 saw Newport send two wrestlers to states. Jamie Hildebrandt won sections, while Randy Smith and Adam Robinson copped runner-up honors. The team also had three third-place wrestlers and two fourths. Jamie and Randy both made it to the district/region finals before taking runner-up honors. Freshman Damian Jones took a fourth-place medal, just missing a trip to states. Jamie advanced to the state quarter-finals by winning his first match before losing a close 7-6 match.

Jamie Hildebrand graduated in 1990 with two section championships and district/region runner-up and fourth-place medals. His overall record was 60-20, with 23-5 and 27-4 finishes his junior and senior years. Jamie's went 20-1 in dual meets his senior campaign. He also won the

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Newport holiday tournament and was named a Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team honorable mention his senior year.

In 1991 sophomore Damian Jones became Newport's first district/region champion and state medal winner since 1985. Both Damian and Randy Smith won sections, with Damian going forward to run the table at districts/regions and win two matches at states before bowing 4-2 in the semi-finals. He was injured in consolations and fell to a sixth-place finish.

Randy Smith graduated in 1991 with a section title and two runner-up finishes to go with his district/region second-place medal as a junior. He finished with an overall record of 64-21, including 27-7 and 23-4 marks his junior and season campaigns. He also won the Newport holiday tournament and was named a Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team honorable mention his senior year.

Newport had more than one district champ in 1992 for the first time since 1972 and multiple state place winners for only the second time in its history (the only other being in 1963 when Sherm Hostler and Steve Peters both made the state finals). Damian Jones repeated as district/region champ and was joined by Steve Gettins, both of which had also won sections. The team placed sixth at district/regions, the first top-ten finish since 1985.

Steve had an excellent state tournament, winning three matches, two in overtime, to reach the finals. He won his preliminary match with a sudden victory takedown and escaped with seconds to go in the double overtime rideout period to reach the semi-finals. Steve then became Newport's seventh state finalist by defeating a local rival from East Pennsboro 7 to 3. He dropped a close 4-3 decision in the finals, the History of the PIAA State Wrestling Championships commenting that his opponent "managed a takedown with 1:10 remaining to win the individual title and hold off a hard-charging Gettins."

Damian, whose uncle Bruce was Newport's last state runner-up in 1969, won two matches to advance to the semi-finals for the second year in a row before falling 7-5. He was again forced to injury default in the consolations, but was able to come back and take fifth place for his second state medal.

Steve Gettins graduated in 1992 with a state runner-up trophy, a district/region title, and a section championship as well as a runner-up finish. He ended his career with an overall record of 70-27-1, but a record of 54-9 over his final two seasons. He was 21-7 his junior year and 33-2 his senior year after challenging initial seasons. Steve also won two Newport holiday tournament titles and was named a Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team honorable mention his senior year. That season he also participated in the recently established High School Nationals held by the National High School Coaches Association. Only state champs and runner-ups qualified that year to enter the tournament, which Steve had set a goal to attend. He is the only Newport wrestler

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known to have participated in this national event prior to 2022, by which time the criteria for attending had changed.

1993 was Damian Jones' year. He became Newport's third state champion after again winning section and district/region titles. Combining that postseason tournament run with a third Newport holiday title and a 20-0 undefeated dual meet season led to the first perfect record, 37-0, ever achieved by a Newport varsity wrestler. Going into the district/region tournament Damian had pinned or tech-falled all but two of his 29 opponents - both matches having been at 189 rather than his 171 pound postseason tournament weight. Seven of his eight league dual meet victories were by fall. When he won the district/region tournament, Damian became just the second District 3 wrestler to win three Class AA titles since the small-school class was created in 1974 - the other having been Juan Seiber's nemesis Tony Koontz from Delone Catholic.

The district/region tournament was made odd due to weather. An extraordinary late-winter storm pounded the mid-state with up to two feet of snow, high winds and drifting that caused the second day of the tournament to be postponed till Sunday. Except that road conditions did not improve enough until Tuesday for the tournament to be completed. The Patriot-News observed that Damian limped off the mat after winning his third straight title "and will have precious little time to recover." The state tournament was to begin in just two days.

Damian defeated two previously undefeated wrestlers to win his state title - one in the quarter-finals and one in the finals. His final's opponent was the same wrestler he had defeated in overtime for fifth place in 1992. That opponent had beaten the undefeated returning state champ in the semi-finals to get another crack at Damian. In the first period, according to the write-up in the History of the PIAA State Wrestling Championships, Damian gave up an initial takedown, but earned an escape later in that period and picked up a second one early in the middle stanza to knot the score at 2-2. He broke the tie with a takedown late in the period to lead 4-2 after two. Following a stalling warning with 30 second to go in the third period Damian came out the back door for a reversal with 17 second remaining when his opponent got too high trying for a half-nelson. An escape and a meaningless takedown by his opponent set the final victory at 6-5.

There was extensive coverage of Damian's victory and his parents (father Dave and mother Sue) in the Patriot-News by sportswriter Rod Frisco. Dave was a Newport wrestler who graduated in 1964. A blow by blow narrative of the action in the stands during the finals ended with the conclusion: "And although the Joneses were celebrating in the arena, they were excused if they mistook it for heaven." As to the wrestler, the writer observed that Damian had been coming to the PIAA championships at least since watching Juan Seiber strike gold in 1984 and: "If he ever walks through the Hersheypark Arena doors again, he'll return as the one thing he always wanted to be: a state champion."

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Damian Jones graduated in 1993 with outstanding credentials: state champion; three-time state place winner with other finishes of fifth and sixth; three-time district/region champ; three-time section champ; and three-time Newport holiday tournament champion. His overall record was 119-18-1, with the only losses his junior and senior years coming at the state tournament (32-2 his junior season to go along with his 37-0 undefeated senior season). He had two undefeated dual meet seasons - his junior and senior years (19-0 and 20-0); and was named to the Harrisburg Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team both those seasons. Damian was named outstanding wrestler at the Newport holiday tournament his sophomore and senior years and took home the most falls in the least time trophy as a freshman. He was the first Newport wrestler to gain over 100 career wins; the only Newport wrestler to have an undefeated season when participating in the postseason; Newport's third state champion (along with Sherm Hostler and Juan Seiber); one of only two Newport wrestler's to win three region titles (along with Sherm Hostler); and one of only three Newport wrestlers to win three district titles (along with Sherm Hostler and Andy Zook). After winning his state title, Damian defeated a AAA opponent in the Pennsylvania challenge of champions and wrestled in the prestigious Dapper Dan Wrestling Classic (now called the Pittsburgh Wrestling Classic) pitting the best of Pennsylvania against the best of the other 49 states.

1993-94 through 1995-96

The team's rough patch in duals continued for the next three seasons with records of 8-13 (1993-94); 6-14 (1994-95); and 7-13 (1995-96). There were no seniors on the 1993-94 team and only on the 1995-96 team. Middleburg, Line Mountain and Upper Dauphin were strong in the Tri-Valley league, with Newport having records of 3-5 (1993-94 and 1994-95) and 2-6 (1995-96).

A team highlight during this period was a runner-up finish in the Roller Tournament at Steel-High in December 1993 when Newport won two matches, including a win over past rival Mechanicsburg, but fell to another rival, Boiling Springs, in the finals. And during the 1994-95 season Newport defeated Juniata for the first time since 1986-87.

Postseason success was also limited during this short period. 1994 saw one section champ (Derick Miller) with two third-place medals and a fourth; 1995 was more successful with another section champ (Craig Hockenberry) to go with two runner-ups, a third and a fourth; and in 1996 the team moved up to a fourth place section finish with a champion (Craig Cangioli), three third-place medals and three fourths. There were no district/region place winners.

The team added a new event in the 1995-96 season when it attended the Mt. Lebanon Invitation Duals at Coach Capazzoli's alma mater in the Pittsburgh area. The wrestlers stayed at homes like the arrangement at the old Boiling Springs Christmas Tournament. In signs of things to come, the elementary program attended four tournaments during this season - at Cumberland Valley, West Snyder, Selinsgrove and Indian Valley.

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Craig Hockenberry graduated in 1995, finishing with a section title and a runner-up finish. His over-all record was 83-31, with three twenty-win seasons (23-9 as a sophomore; 22-5 as a junior; and 25-4 as a senior). Craig was a three-time Newport holiday tournament champion and a Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team honorable mention both his junior and senior years.

Dave Warner also graduated in 1995, having taken second, third and fourth places in both sections and the Newport holiday tournament; and was also named honorable mention in the 1994-95 Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team. His overall record was 76-38, with two twenty-win seasons to close out his career (24-5 as a junior and 24-6 as a senior).

1996-97 through 2000-01

Team success returned to Newport during this final period of the next generation years. Winning dual meet records as well as tournament successes were achieved, and Tri-Valley league wins increased. Individual achievements exceeded those of the first next generation periods in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Dual meet records were 13-9 (1996-97); 10-7 (1997-98); 7-5 (1998-99); 10-5 (1999-2000); and 11-4 (2000-01). The team was 5-3 in the league during the 1996-97 and 1997-98 seasons, fell to 4-4 the next two seasons, but rose to 6-2 in 2000-01. Newport qualified for its first District 3 team tournament in 1996-97, defeating Susquenita 32-30 in the quarter-finals to avenge a 28-34 loss to their down-river rival at the Perry County but fell to Wyomissing in the semi-finals. A second qualification for the team tournament followed the next season when Newport again gained the Tri-Valley spot by defeating all five other District 3 teams during league competition, but lost to Conrad Weiser in the quarter-finals.

Newport had quite a one-two punch at the beginning of matches during the 1997-98 season when its 103 and 112 pounders, both sons of former Newport wrestlers, were undefeated in dual meets. Nate Niman (son of Dan Niman, Class of 1975) was 17-0 in his final season and Adam Smith (son of Hunter Smith, Class of 1974) was 17-0 in his inaugural season. Adam led the team in dual meet team points (96), with Nate second (87), Ryan Barnes third (51) and Clint Bitting fourth (42). Barnes' dual record was 13-4 and Bitting's 12-5. Jon Clay was 7-1. Smith had the most dual meet falls (10): Jason Mills and Niman had nine and Barnes and Bitting eight. Mills led in totals pins at 18, with Smith (15) and Barnes (13) next in line.

The limited dual meet and fall records for the 1998-99 through 2000-01 seasons reflect that Adam Smith was again undefeated in dual meets his sophomore (12-0) and junior (11-0) seasons, losing his only dual meet as a senior. In 1998-99 Clint Bitting finished with the most total falls (20); Smith was second with 13. For the 1999-2000 season Smith had the most dual meet team points (63), followed by Clayton Fisher (47) and Levis Gustafson (46). Four wrestlers had the most dual meet falls at five: Mike Beaver, Fisher, Gustafson and Travis Young.

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Gustafson and Smith tied for the most total falls with 13; Mike Beaver had 10. Smith had the most dual meet team points (80) and total falls (21) during the 2000-01 season.

The team traveled to the Mt. Lebanon Duals for the second and last time during the 1996-97 season, winning two of three matches. During the 1999-2000 season Newport attended the Daniel Boone Duals, winning all three matches. The next season they attended their first of many Canner Duals at Biglerville, winning two of three matches. Joining this tournament reflected an uptick in competition level. Biglerville was one of the top teams in District 3 during this time, having won the district/region individual tournament title in 1993 and been runner-ups in 1994 and 1995. They took a third place in the District 3 individual tournament in 2001 and were a champion (1990) and two-time runner-ups (1993 and 1995) in the District team tournament. In 1994 Biglerville finished second in the state individual team tournament; and in 2000 tie for fifth.

The Buffaloes did well in its own holiday tournament, taking third places during the 1996-97 and 1999-2000 seasons, a fourth place in 1997-98, and capping the next generation years with runner-up honors in 2000-01. Although reports I've found only name the top two teams, the number of place winners at the 1998-99 tournament seem to reflect a third or fourth place finish. Two new in season individual tournaments were also added to the schedule during this time period - the Bullet Invitational Tournament at Brandywine Heights starting during the 1997-98 season and the Thomas Chevrolet Tournament at Bedford starting in 1998-99. These were/are very competitive tournaments, but Newport gained a third-place finish at Brandywine during the 1997-98 season and a fifth in 1999-2000.

Team titles were gained at the section tournament in 1996-97 and 1997-98, with third-place finishes in 1998-99 and 2001-01 and a fourth place in 1999-2000. In 1997 Newport had seven finalist, crowning two champs (Nate Niman and Craig Cangioli), to go along with the five runner-ups, two third-place finishers and one fourth placer, in winning a competitive tournament over East Pennsboro and Susquenita. An even more impressive showing was made in 1998 when the team took eight into the finals with six coming out on top with gold medals (Nate Niman, Adam Smith, Clint Bitting, Jon Clay, John Steffen and Jason Mills). The two runner-ups were joined by a third-place finisher and two fourth placers, for a total of 11 section medalists. Newport scored 45 more points than second place Juniata. Ten Buffaloes made the semi-finals at the 1997 section tournament and 11 in 1998.

Strong Juniata and Halifax teams scored more points at the 1999 section tournament, but Newport still had three champs, all repeaters (Adam Smith, Clint Bitting and John Steffen), as well as two third placers and a fourth-place finisher. Halifax and Juniata dominated again at the 2000 section tournament, with Upper Dauphin just squeaking by Newport for third place. Five Newport wrestlers made the finals, with two taking titles (Adam Smith and Levi Gustafson), and another wrestler taking third place. Newport placed five in the finals again in 2001, with two winning championships (Adam Smith and Travis Young). Three fourth places to go along with

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the two champs and three runner-ups gave Newport a solid third place over Susquenita but behind Juniata and Halifax again. Travis' section title was the first to be gained by a wrestler from Greenwood.

This time period saw a change to the postseason set up. Starting in 1999 District 3 ceased being its own region in the small-school AA division. The southeast region was established with representatives from Districts 3 and 1, like prior to 1974, but with more wrestlers advancing from districts to regions. After that two-district set up during 1999 and 2000, District 11 was added to the southeast region in 2001. The region has consisted of representatives from these districts ever since. In 1999 and 2000 the top five finishers from District 3 and the top three from District 1 advanced to regions. In 2001 District 3 was awarded six qualifiers, District 11 four and District 1 two.

Newport had a presence at the district/region and state tournaments in 1997 for the first time in four years. Next-generation wrestler Nate Niman placed second at the district/region tournament, being nipped 4-3 in the finals. He went 1-2 at states, losing 6-4 and in overtime. His showing was a sign of things to come, as Newport would have place winners at districts/regions and at least one wrestler at states for the next five years. Nate took a third at districts/regions as a senior in 1998, easily won his round of 16 match at states, but then dropped close decisions to the eventual third-place and fourth-place medalists to end an accomplished career.

Craig Congioli graduated in 1997 with two section championships to his credit as well as a first-place medal at the Newport holiday tournament his junior season. He finished his career with an overall record of 80-36, improving each of four varsity seasons to conclude with a 24-8 record his junior year and 29-4 his final season.

Ryan Barnes, Jon Clay and Nate Niman graduated in 1998. Ryan was a two-time section runner-up, also reaching the Newport holiday tournament finals twice. His four-year varsity record was 67-49 (20-11 and 24-10 his junior and senior seasons. Ryan was a Tri-Valley League all-star at least three seasons, finishing with a dual meet record of 13-4 his senior campaign while accumulating 51 team points, eight dual meet falls and 13 total pins.

Jon Clay won a section title his senior year and was also a two-time runner-up. His overall record was 71-37, with a record of 43-8 in his final two campaigns (26-4 as a junior and 17-4 as a senior). He took home the Newport holiday tournament trophy for most falls in the least time as a junior. Jon was 7-1 in dual meets his senior season, finishing with 11 falls in 21 matches.

Nate Niman was a district/region runner-up and third-place medalist, and a two-time section champion. He made the state tournament twice, reaching the quarter-finals his senior season. Nate had a 17-0 undefeated dual meet record his senior year and won the Brandywine tournament. His overall record was 77-15. He was a three-time runner-up at the Newport holiday

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tournament and was given an honorable mention in the Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team his last two years. Nate participated in the statewide AAA-AA challenge of champions his senior year.

The next second-generation Newport wrestler to make his mark at districts, regions and states was Adam Smith. After a stellar freshman campaign in which his only two losses were at the district/region tournament, Adam took a third place at the District 3 tournament in 1999, losing only to four-time district champion and two-time state champion Evan Sola of Conrad Weiser. Clint Bitting took a fourth place at districts, qualifying him to move forward to the new southeast region tournament. Adam took another third place at regions, again only losing to fellow sophomore Sola.

Adam hit the third-place trifecta when he became Newport's first third-place state medal winner since Juan Seiber in 1984. He lost in the round of 16 to the eventual state champion, but then ran the table by winning all five of his consolation matches. Adam not only avenged his district and region losses to Sola but pinned the returning and eventual two-time state champion Chris Fleeger in his third-place match. Adam hit a duck-under into a double leg for a takedown, then applied a turkey bar for the fall midway through the second period.

Clint Bitting and John Steffen graduated in 1999. Clint was a two-time section champ and took a fourth-place medal home from the district tournament his senior year. He had an overall record of 68-28, with a 27-8 record his senior season, when he led the team in total falls (20), won the Newport holiday tournament and was named honorable mention in the Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team. John was also a two-time section champion. He had an overall record of 40-20, also winning the Newport holiday tournament his senior campaign and being named honorable mention in the Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team.

Newport had two district place winners again in 2000. Freshman Travis Young, a Greenwood student, took a fourth place, but was stopped at regions and did not qualify for states. Adam Smith entered and left districts undefeated. His match in the finals against returning state champion Shain Leggett of Biglerville was the talk of the district; and lived up to its billing. Patriot-News sportswriter Bob Flounders reported that it not only did not disappoint, but if anything exceeded expectations. Leggett scored a takedown in the first period and the two wrestlers traded escapes to end the second 3-1 Leggett. Adam scored two takedowns in the third period and rode Leggett out for the 5-4 victory. Unfortunately, Adam could not repeat his district performance at regions and had to settle for a runner-up finish to Leggett. At states Adam suffered a 5-3 overtime loss in the quarter-finals to the eventual state champion and wrestled back to a fifth place finish to become only the third Newport wrestler to have two state medals under his belt going into his senior season (joining Sherm Hostler and Damian Jones).

Levi Gufstufson graduated in 2000. Levi ended his career with a section title and a runner-up finish. His overall record in three varsity seasons was 57-28. Levi was a Newport

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holiday tournament champion; led the team in totals falls (13) his senior year; and was also third in dual meet team points as a senior.

In 2001 Adam Smith had set backs at districts and regions, but persevered to become Newport's fourth state champion and second next generation wrestler to take the big prize. Adam was district runner-up, losing 4-3 to Brandywine Heights' Matt Guerrieri. At regions Adam dropped another 4-3 decision, this time to nemesis Justin Herzog of Northern Lehigh in the semi-finals, but defeated Guerrieri 3-1 in the consolation semi-finals and took a third place. At states Adam had a tech fall and a 16-7 easy victory before running up against Herzog again. This time Adam won 5-1 when it most counted, in the state semi-finals, for his first victory in four meetings over Herzog. Patriot-News sports writer Tim Leone noted that, with the score tied 1-1 and the clock ticking below 20 seconds in the third period, Adam hit a single leg and powered Herzog to his back for 2 and 2 to end the match. And who would Adam meet in the finals other than Guerrieri, who had taken out the returning state runner-up in the semi-finals by fall.

According to the "History of the PIAA State Wrestling Championships," Adam opened leads of 4-1 and 6-2 in the finals on the strength of two takedowns and a reversal to cruise past his fellow District 3 opponent 7-4 in the finals. Sports writer Leone observed that Smith took a 4-1 lead with a pair of first-period takedowns, but the main key to his win was his ability to survive Guerrieri's brutal leg ride. No foe at states had managed to go the distance with Guerrieri, mostly due to his putting in the boots and hitting punishing power half Nelsons. His opponent was able to get his legs in almost at will on Adam according to Leone but was never able to turn him for back points. Adam joked that it seemed he couldn't breathe for about 30 seconds and his neck was a little stiff, but "It's definitely worth it."

The Patriot-News featured the friendship between Adam and Jim Collins of Northern Lebanon, who had won the 112 pound title just before Adam's match. The two pals had practiced together off and on for three years, including the Sunday evening before states at Adam's grandfather's barn in Buck's Valley. At a celebration with family and friends following an impromptu parade staged in Newport after the victory, Adam told News-Sun sports writer John Alvanitakis that he had thought of being a state champion many times but: "This is awesome. It's even better than I imagined it would be."

Earlier in the season Adam had credited Coach Capozzoli for his success, having done anything and everything to get him to where he was - including strapping on the head gear on occasion. A News-Sun article in late December of 2000 also indicated that Adam's Uncle Brooks (Class 1972) had told Adam when he was younger: "The day you beat me is the day you're a

state champ." Well, that day had come some weeks earlier on the mats in the Smith barn when Adam edged Brooks 5-1, for his first win against his then 46 year-old uncle. The real state title followed a few months later.

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Rusty Bentz and Adam Smith graduated in 2001. Rusty finished with two section runner-ups and a third; and a final record of 53-33. He came on his senior year with a 28-10 record, a runner-up finish at the Newport holiday tournament and significant bronze finishes at both the Brandywine and Bedford tournaments to go along with his section medal.

Adam Smith graduated with quite a resume. To begin with: state champion, three-time state medalist with a third and fifth to accompany the gold medal; a runner-up and two third place finishes at regions; a district championship as well as runner-up and third place finishes; and a four-time section champ. He was a three-time Newport holiday tournament champion (being injured and unable to wrestle in the tournament his junior year); a two-time Brandywine tournament champion and two-time runner-up; and a two-time Bedford tournament champ and one-time runner-up. He was also a three-time member of the Patriot-News Big 13 all-star team, having been named the top underclassman as a sophomore and a regular weight-class member his junior and senior seasons. Adam was selected his senior year to wrestle in the Dapper Dan Wrestling Classic (now called the Pittsburgh Wrestling Classic) where the best of Pennsylvania take on the best from the remainder of the United States. Only Adam and Damian Jones have competed in this top-notch national event since it was established in 1975.

Adam lost only one dual meet, when he moved up in weight his senior season and lost a close match to a three-time state place winner, finishing at 54-1 with three undefeated dual meet seasons (17-0 as a freshman, 12-0 as a sophomore, and 11-0 as a junior). His overall record was 132-14, the most wins of any Newport wrestler, with 62 total falls, now fourth on the all-time list. He had at least 25 wins each of his seasons (27-2 as a freshman; 35-5 as a sophomore; 33-3 as a junior; and 37-4 as a senior). Half of Adam's losses were to wrestlers who either won state titles or were in the finals; and several to those and others were avenged in later matches the same year or the next year. Five of his victories were against wrestlers who were defending or became state champions.

Adam went on to wrestle four years of Division 1 varsity at Penn State University, graduating in 2005. He qualified for the NCAA tournament three times, making the round of 12 his senior season. Facing the nation's toughest wrestlers in the Big 10 conference and against other Penn State foes, Adam ended with a record of 87-61. He added a bronze medal at the University Freestyle Nationals and then continued in freestyle after graduating. He was a three-time place winner in the Senior National Freestyle Championships and competed in the 2006 and 2007 world team trials and 2008 final Olympic trials.

Perry County tournament

Newport did not fare well in the County tournament throughout the next generation period, with no outright championships. The team did garner a tri-championship in the 2000-01 season when it lost to Susquenita by only seven points and won a 30-30 criteria dual with West Perry; West Perry had defeated Susquenita by ten. Otherwise, Newport had five second place

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finishes and five thirds, defeating one or another of the other Perry County squads in six of the eleven years but never both. Susquenita and West Perry both had five County titles to go along with their tri-championship during this first 11 years of the tournament. Newport's record against both county rivals was 3-8.

As a historical note, prior to the start of the tournament in the 1990-91 season, Newport had a slight edge (13-12) over Susquenita in the 25 dual meets they had previously wrestled. Newport won 12 of the first 13 meets from 1960-61 through 1972-73; but Susquenita won 11 of the 12 through 1989-90 after the rivalry had been renewed in 1978-79 after a short hiatus. Newport's win over Susquenita in the 1996-97 District 3 dual meet tournament was their first since the 1979-80 season. Susquenita was a powerhouse in the 1980s, winning AA District 3/ South Central Region individual tournament team titles in 1981, 1984, 1985 and 1986 before moving up to AAA in 1987 and coming in fifth among the big schools. And they were third in the team standings at the 1985 AA state individual tournament. Newport's pre-Perry County tournament record against West Perry was much better - 13 wins and 3 losses. The rivalry started in 1974-75, with West Perry not picking up a win until 1980-81.

Newport Holiday tournament

As noted, the team started the next generation years by winning their holiday tournament during the 1988-89 season and being runner-up in 1989-90. They had ten wrestlers place in the top three in 1988-89, with five runner-ups and one champ (Chris Davis). In 1989-90 the Buffaloes had three third-place finishers and three champions (Jamie Hildebrandt, Brian Kain and Adam Robinson). Damian Jones was awarded the trophy for most falls in the least time. It's likely Newport placed in the top four in 1990-91, although available records only reflect the top two in team points. Newport had five in the finals, with three champs (Randy Smith, Damian Jones and Steve Gettins). Damian was named most valuable wrestler. Newport placed fourth in both the 1991-92 and 1992-93 tournaments, with three in the finals and two champions both years (Damian Jones and Steve Gettins at the former and Craig Hockenberry and Damian at the latter). Damian was named most valuable wrestler again at the 1992-93 tournament.

After a three-year lull in which it had only two champions (Craig Hockenberry in both 1993-94 and 1994-95), Newport finished the next generation period with five good holiday tournaments. The 1996-97 tournament saw a third-place team finish with six top three place finishers and champ (Craig Cangioli). Jon Clay won the award for most falls in the least time (three in 4:23). In 1997-98 Newport finished fourth with five in the finals and two champions

(Adam Smith and Jason Andrews). Adam was named the outstanding wrestler. Newport was not one of the top two teams as reflected in the information available, but likely finished in the top four at the 1998-99 tournament where it had five finish in the top three with three champs (Adam Smith, Clint Bitting and John Steffen). Adam was again selected the outstanding wrestler.

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Newport finished a solid third in 1999-2000 with six top-three finishers, three in the finals and one champion (Levi Gufstafson). Adam Smith was injured and unable to participate. Newport capped the next generation period with a runner-up finish in 2000-01. Seven wrestlers finished in the top three, four were in the finals and there were two champions (Adam Smith and Travis Young). Travis was awarded the outstanding wrestler trophy.

The tournament was quite competitive during these first years, with five to ten wrestlers from teams in the tournament often making the state tournament. Most years at least one of the champions placed in the state tournament. The best years in this regard were the 1986-87 tournament when ten wrestlers made states, with three of the champions placing, one (Dave Hart of Juniata) taking gold; and 1991-92 when eleven made states, including holiday tournament champions Steve Gettins and Damian Jones, who placed second and fifth, respectively. Tournament champions Damian Jones in 1993 and Adam Smith in 2001 won state titles, as Dave Hart had in 1987.

There were ten teams in the tournament its first three years, with Rockwood winning the first tournament and falling to last before ceasing to attend after that. Kishacoquillas won the second and third tournaments and then ceased attending. Millersburg had taken Rockwood's place in that third year, but only attended that one year. Starting with the fourth tournament, held during the 1988-89 season, it became an eight-team affair with the same teams through 1993-94: Juniata, Tussey Mountain, West Snyder, East Pennsboro, Camp Hill, Juniata Valley and Southern Huntingdon, along with host Newport. Tussey Mountain dropped out and there were only seven teams in 1994-95. The next year Camp Hill did not attend but Shippensburg and Greencastle-Antrim were added. The same eight teams competed again in 1996-97. The next year East Pennsboro and Juniata Valley did not attend, but Camp Hill returned and Kutztown was added. The same eight teams competed again the in 1998-99. An entire new mix of ten teams was assembled for the 1999-2000 season, with West Snyder, Shippensburg, Greencastle-Antrim and Kutztown dropping out and Warrior Run, Coatesville, Beth Center, Daniel Boone, Sayre and Bowling Brook Prep from Maryland added. The following year Coatesville and Beth Center did not attend, but Cedar Crest and Penns Valley were added.

Juniata was the most dominant team in the tournament through the end of the next generation years. Counting the three tournaments before this period started, they were in the top four in 14 of the 16 years. Available records provide the top four teams for all but three of the tournaments. Records only reflect the top two teams for the 1995-6 and 1998-99 tournaments, and the top three for the 1996-7 tournament. Juniata was not in the top two in 1995-96 or the top three in 1996-97; so they may have even been in the top four those two tournaments. Juniata won five tournaments (1992-93, 1994-95, 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01), were runner-ups four times, third four times and fourth once.

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The second most successful team was West Snyder with nine top four finishes. They took top honors four times (1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1997-98), were third twice and fourth three times. Newport also had nine top four finishes - a championship in 1988-89 to go along with two runner-up, a third and four fourth place finishes. East Pennsboro had seven top fours, having won the tournament twice (1993-94 and 1995-96), placed second three times, third once and fourth once.

Successful teams that were not longtime participants during the first 16 years were Kishacoquillas, Shippensburg and Warrior Run. Kish won two of the three tournaments it attended (1986-87 and 1987-88) and was third to Rockwood and Juniata at the inaugural tournament during the 1985-86 season. Shippensburg won one of the four tournaments it attended (1996-97) and was runner-up in 1997-98. They did not place in the top two in their other two tournaments, but may have been in the top four. Warrior Run reflected things to come when it started attending in 1999-2000 and placed second and third in its first two tournaments.

Other in season individual tournaments (Brandywine and Bedford)

Coach Capozzoli's entry of the team into the Bullet Invitational Tournament at Brandywine Heights during the 1997-98 season and the Thomas Chevrolet Tournament at Bedford the following year upped the ante and provided excellent statewide exposure to Newport wrestlers. The Brandywine tournament included from 13 to 16 teams, with a good mix of other teams from District 3 and teams from District 11. Brandywine Heights and Northern Lehigh were the dominant teams, placing first and second during this timeframe based on available records. Both were dominant in their districts and statewide contenders during the 1990s and through 2006-07 when Newport stopped attending the tournament.

Brandywine was the District 3 team tournament champ in 1998, 2001 and 2005; and runner-ups in 1999 and 2002. They won the District 3/South Central region individual tournament in 1992 and 1998 and were runner-ups in 1996; and won the District 3 individual tournament in 2001, 2006 and 2007 and were runner-ups in 1999 and 2003. They won the PIAA individual state tournament title in 2001. Northern Lehigh won the District 11 team duals in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2005 and 2006, and were the runner-up in 2003. They won the PIAA team dual meet title in 2005 and were runner-up in 2006. Northern Lehigh won the District 11 individual tournament in 1998, 1999 and 2006, and were runner-ups in 1997, 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2007. They were third in the PIAA individual state tournament in 1991; tie for fourth in 1997; runner-ups in 1998; third again in 2000; and runner-ups again in 2006.

Newport did well at its first Brandywine tournament, placing third of 16 teams (only eight points below the second place hosts). Nate Niman and Adam Smith both won titles; Jon Clay and Jason Mills took thirds; and three wrestlers placed fifth and one sixth. The standings for the next season's tournament have not been found, but Adam placed second and the team had three fifth-place finishers. During the 1999-2000 Newport placed fifth of 13 teams, with Adam

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winning his second title; Martin Getz also making the finals; Adam Sturgeon taking third; Clayton Fisher fourth; and two wrestlers placing fifth and one sixth. The 2000-01 season saw the team finish seventh of 14 teams. Adam reached the finals for a fourth time, sustaining a loss that was later avenged at states; both Travis Young and Rusty Bentz finished third; and three others placed fifth and two sixth.

The Bedford tournament included 22 or 23 teams, mostly from Districts 5, 6 and 7 in southwestern and north central Pennsylvania but also some from Districts 3 and 11 as well as Maryland. The tournament had started in 1989, with Jefferson-Morgan (District 7) and host Bedford (District 5) each winning four tournaments in the 13 years through the 2000-01 season. Also having won team titles are Cambria Heights (District 6), Tri-Valley (District 11), New Oxford (District 3) and Northern Garrett, a Maryland team that won in 2000 and 2001.

Ten different wrestlers who wrestled at the Bedford tournament during the 13 years through 2001, including Adam Smith, were state champs at least once, and another dozen were state runner-ups at least once. Sixty-six different wrestlers in total placed in the top eight at states at least once and many multiple times. Cary Kolat of Jefferson-Morgan, arguably the best Pennsylvania high school wrestler ever, won three of the first four tournaments - apparently not participating his sophomore season because he was undefeated in his PIAA career.

Newport did not excel, but improved its showing at its first three Bedford tournaments. During the 1998-99 season Newport placed twentieth, with two medals winners. Adam Smith was runner-up when he fell to defending state runner-up Ulysses Davis of Beth Center in the finals. Clint Bitting took a fourth place. Newport moved up to thirteen the next season with five place winners. Adam Smith struck gold and the other four all took eighth places. In 2000-01 the team placed eleventh with four medalists, all in the top six. Adam Smith won another title and Rusty Bentz took a third place.

Uniforms

Multiple uniforms for teams became a thing in the 1990s. Newport appears to have purchased new uniforms for the 1991-92, 1996-97 and 1999-2000 seasons. The 1991 singlets were mostly blue, with Newport in white on the front along with white bars around the midriff and pant legs. The 1996 uniforms were white on the top and blue in the trunk and legs, with Newport in blue on the front. The 1999 singlets were all blue with an N and Newport in white on the left pant leg and a Buffalo graphic on the back.

Rules

There were several rule changes during the next generation period in addition to the change in weight classes at the beginning in 1988-89 as noted above. For the 1991-92 season overtime was changed to a sudden death period starting from the neutral position with a two-

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minute maximum. If the score was still tied, two 30-second overtime periods from the down position were held. If the score was still tied, a rideout period was held. In dual meets, matches tied after regulation were scored ties for one more season. The new overtime rules replaced those that had been in place since the 1976-77 season involving three one-minute overtime periods, the first from standing, that were wrestled in full unless there was a fall; and with criteria to decide the winner if there was still a tie after the three overtime periods, the final criteria being a referee's decision if necessary.

The scoring conventions for overtime matches under the new (and still current) rules have changed over the years. Victories in the first overtime period have been designated as sudden death, sudden victory, or just plain overtime wins. Those matches ending after the two short second and third periods have been designated as tiebreaker, overtime tiebreaker, or again just plain overtime wins. And those matches going to the fourth overtime period have been designated as tiebreaker, rideout, overtime rideout and overtime tiebreaker. Starting in the 2009-10 season, the convention has been normalized to overtime for a first period sudden victory, tiebreaker for a win after the two down position periods, and ultimate tiebreaker for a win based on a rideout period.

Starting in 1994-95 wrestlers were required to report to the scorer's table and identify themselves prior to bouts. And finally two additional places were added to the state tournament for the 1998-9 season when seventh and eighth placements were first awarded.

Future college wrestlers

Some wrestlers from the next generation era went on to wrestle in college in addition to Adam Smith ('01) discussed above. They included: Dave Jones ('89) (Columbia); Damian Jones ('93) (Cornell); and Steve Harper ('97) (Millersville).

Future coaches

I'm not aware of any Newport wrestlers who graduated during the next generation who moved on to become head coaches or referees, but some were or are assistant or junior high coaches. Damian Jones ('93) was an assistant coach in North Carolina. Adam Robinson ('90), Randy Smith ('91), Mike Lesisko ('92), Andy Buffington ('97), Nate Niman ('98), Adam Smith ('01) and Mike Gunkle ('97) all brought their skills to help the Newport program over the years since they graduated. Mike Gunkle is still an assistant coach after starting in the 2007-08 season and Adam Smith has been running the elementary program at Newport since the 2018-19 season. Adam was also an assistant coach at Juniata after graduating college.

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The first family of Newport wrestling?

After Adam Smith won his 100th match during December, 2000, the News-Sun ran an extensive article on his accomplishments to date. The article, by Ryan Hockensmith, states that the milestone helps ignite a tasty debate on who is the first family of PeCo wrestling. With Adam's 102 victories at that time, the Smith family (consisting of Charlie, Brooks, Hunter, Wes and Adam) then had 234 career wins. Ryan observed this total did not even include those of Adam's uncle from his mother's side, Lon Barrick, who finished his career with a 74-15-1 mark. The 234 wins put the Smith family 25 away from the Jones family (Dave, Bruce, David and Damian). With 25 more wins and a third state medal by Adam, the author observed that the debate could be pushed toward the Smith family's side.

Well, Adam won 30 more matches and a state title during that 2000-01 season. Does that lock the Martin Smith family in as the first family of Perry County/Newport wrestling? Seems too close to call. Below are details on the Paul Jones and Martin Smith families, as well two other families that have had four wrestlers who won postseason tournaments in either over two generations or through multiple prongs in one generation. Also noted are four other families that have had at least four members who wrestled varsity matches over multiple generations.

The Paul Jones family had four Newport wrestlers, all of whom won section titles or more. Dave (Class of 1964) was a two-time section champ and district runner-up with an overall record of 33-11-2 and a dual meet record of 23-8-2. Brother Bruce ('69) was a state runner-up and a two-time section, district and region champ with an overall record of 49-4-1 and a dual meet record of 29-1-1. Dave's oldest son David ('89) was a section champ with 58 overall victories (43-13-1 overall his last two seasons); and his younger son Damian ('93) was a state champ, a fifth and sixth place state medalist, and a three-time section, district and region champ, with an overall record of 119-18-1. Both Bruce and Damian had two undefeated dual meet seasons each and Damian is the only Newport wrestler to have an undefeated dual meet and tournament season (37-0). Eighteen of Bruce's 29 dual meet wins were by fall and 23 of his 49 overall wins were. The family's overall record is 259-59-5 according to available records.

The Martin Smith family has had five Newport wrestlers, three of whom won section titles or more. Charlie ('67) won two section titles with an overall record of 34-6 and a dual meet record of 26-2. Brother Brooks ('72) won a section title with an overall record of 54-4 and a dual meet record of 38-2. And brother Hunter ('74) finished with a 23-9-2 overall record and a 20-6-2 dual meet record. Hunter's son Adam ('01) was a state champ, a third and fifth place state medalist, a four-time section champ, a district champ, runner-up and third-place medalist, and a three-time top-three region finisher, with an overall record of 132-14 and dual meet record of 54-1. Both Charlie and Brooks had undefeated dual meet seasons, and Adam had three. Twenty-nine of Brooks's 38 dual meet wins were pins and 37 of his 54 overall wins were. Eighteen of Charlie's 26 dual meet wins were by fall and 23 of his 34 overall wins were. Sixty-two of Adams total wins were by fall. Brooks is the only Newport wrestler to win four holiday tournaments and

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has the best total win-loss percentage record in Newport history. Adam has the most total wins in Newport history and the best dual meet win-loss percentage record. Adding the matches won by Charlie's son Wes ('98), the family's overall record stands at 264-63-2 according to available records.

Since the turn of the century, when the News-Sun article ran, a grandson and a granddaughter in the Martin Smith have logged varsity matches for Newport. Ryan Lawler ('25), grandson of Hunter ('74), finished his freshman season 15-2 in dual meets and 32-9 overall. Twenty-three of his wins were by fall; 16 of which were in tournaments. Adalynn Smith ('25), daughter of Adam ('01), received two dual meet forfeit wins, being the first female wrestler to notch a win for the team.

The William Peters family had four cousins on the team through the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as two sons of the cousins later in the century. Four family members won section titles or more and they are the only family in Newport history to have three district champs. Steve Peters ('64) was a state runner-up, a region champ, a district champ and runner-up, and a two-time section champ with an overall record of 61-6-2 and a dual meet record of 45-2-2. Cousin Mark Peters ('72) was a region champ, a district champ and a two-time section champion, with an overall record of 36-9-1 and a dual meet record of 22-7-1. Cousin Lon Barrick ('72) was a district champ and a three-time section champion with an overall record of 74-14-1 and a dual meet record of 48-7-1. Mark's brother Dean ('72) also won a section title. Steve had three undefeated dual meet seasons. Twenty-nine of his 61 wins were by fall and 27 of his 45 dual meet victories were. Adding those matches by Steve's son Stan ('86) and Mark's son Warren ('01), the family's overall record is 180-50-4 by available records.

The Earl Heisey Sr. family had five Newport wrestlers, four of whom won section titles or more. Earl Jr. ('59) was a district runner-up and section champ with an overall record of 27-7-1 and a dual meet record of 18-5-1. Brother Jim ('61) was a district and section champ with an overall record of 40-11-1 and a dual meet record of 34-7-1. And brother Bob ('66) had an overall record of 17-9 and a dual meet record of 15-6. Earl's son Todd ('79) was a section champ with an overall record of 64-21-1 and a dual meet record of 49-9-1 (with a 16-1 dual record his senior campaign). Earl's second son Mike ('83) won a section title and finished with 48 overall varsity victories (35-9-2 his final two seasons) and 30 dual meet wins (22-6-2 his final two seasons). The family's overall record is 196-79-6 according to available records.

Those families other than discussed above with four or more wrestlers who logged varsity matches are as follows:

Fleisher - brothers Bill ('66) and Dan (69); Bill's son Tony ('88); cousin/uncle
Luther ('62) and son Andy ('95)

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Campbell - Darry ('71); nephews Rocky ('75), Bret ('84) and Bart ('86); Rocky's nephew (and Bret and Bart's cousin) Shane ('92); and Bart's son Cody ('10); also Bret and Bart's cousins Chris and Shane Davis ('89) and Shane's son Will ('21)

Kraft - Jim Kraft ('72); and nephews Chuck ('74), Tony ('75) and Scott ('80) Maxwell

Lenig - brothers John ('77), Bob ('78), Greg ('80) and Andy ('82)

Clay - brothers Dale ('78) and Dave ('84); Dale's son Jon ('98); and Dave's sons Ian ('12) and Ben ('14)

Otstott - brothers Dylan ('93), Jost ('02) and Zach ('08); and Dylan's son Tucker ('23)

Please bring any family situations that were missed or set out in error to my attention.