

## Why wrestle for USA Wrestling-OHIO?

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By: Brad Bournival COLUMBUS – The noise heard all around Value City Arena last weekend was the smack of USA Wrestling. Over and over members of Ohio's Freestyle and Greco Roman wrestling teams took center stage at the state tournament and over and over again their opponents found their backs cemented to the mat. All totaled, 25 individuals from USA Wrestling were in the finals of Division I, II and III and 14 of those came home champions.

“USA wrestling is a great program,” Aurora's Ty Mitch said. “I'm just glad I could live up to its legacy. All the national tournaments and events I've gone to prepare me for here.”

National tournament preparation by USA Wrestling produced a four-time state champion in Monroeville's Logan Stieber and three-time state champions in Mitch and the Eagles duo of Hunter Stieber and Cam Tessari.

Two-time state champions Jerome Robinson of St. Ignatius, Josh Demas of Westerville North, Johnni DiJulius of Walsh Jesuit and the St. Paris Graham tandem of Felipe Martinez and Max Thomusseit joined first-timers St. Edward's Nick Sulzer, Wadsworth's Nick Tavanello, Wapakoneta's Logan Erb and Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy's Nathan Tomasello to make it a banner weekend for the program.

Throw in runners-up Jack Young of Mentor, Kagan Squire of Wadsworth, Kodie Egnor of Elyria, Randy Languis of Dublin Scioto, Anthony Salupo of St. Edward, David Habat of St. Ignatius, Josh Linden and Billy Vaughan of Brecksville, Sam Wheeler of Copley, Konner Witt of Oak Harbor and William Spangler of Keystone and USA Wrestling's prowess was felt everywhere.

“Ohio is one of the best wrestling states,” Squire said. “I've been wrestling in it since I was little and you get that mentality that you want to be the best. “You only have to take an hour drive to find the best kids in the nation. It gets a lot of kids better.”

At the D-I level, 10 of the 14 weight classes had USA Wrestling participants. Of those 10, there were All-USA Wrestling finals between Robinson and Kagan Squire at 119, Brad Squire and Salupo at 145, Sulzer and Linden at 160 and Demas and Wheeler at 171.

St. Edward's Greg Kuhar also placed at heavyweight as did Wadsworth's Sheldon Brandenburg at 160, making it a stellar weekend for USA Wrestling. “It's great,” Logan Stieber said. “Sometimes Ohio doesn't get the attention in freestyle it should. USA Wrestling is a great organization. It's helped me a lot.” With Kagan Squire, Wheeler, Tavanello, DiJulius, Martinez, Witt, Erb, Tomasello, Spangler, Tessari, Brandenburg, Kuhar and Hunter Stieber back, don't expect USA Wrestling to go away anytime soon. “We're going to have a solid team the next year or two,” Ohio chairman Chris Kallai Sr. said. “We're looking for those guys to be leaders as we go to Fargo (ND) and the Junior Duals in Oklahoma.”