

Jan. 26 Wrestling

Township grapplers gear for this weekend's Mercer County Tournament

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Jan. 26: Wrestling champions will be crowned this weekend when the Mercer County Tournament is held at Robbinsville High.

Action begins at 5 p.m. Friday with pre-quarterfinals, followed at approximately 7:30 by the quarters. Wrestling will resume with consolation action at 9 a.m. Saturday. The semifinals are slated for 10:30 a.m., consolation finals at 2:30 p.m. and championship finals at 4:30.

Hopewell Valley is the MCT defending champion and has won three of the last four titles, but this year's tourney will have a different look as prep schools Peddie and Lawrenceville join the usual group of teams from the Colonial Valley Conference.

Coaches will meet tonight to determine the seeding for the 14 weight classes.

Among Hamilton Township squads, Steinert's Joe Michel is the lone returning champion. Michel won the title at 112 pounds despite entering the event as the No. 5 seed. Michel is 14-1 this season at 126, but was expected to drop to 120 for the tourney. His only loss came to Tom River South's Matt Theobolt.

Sean McDonald is the Spartans' only other returning placewinner. He was fifth at 152 last year. This season, the senior is 13-2 at 170.

Other top wrestlers for Steinert heading into the MCT are Tyler Beers (12-3, 120), Brandon Bernstein (9-3, 152), Jon Bussi (8-3, 195), Matt McDonald (12-1, 160), Mike Remboski (10-3, 285) and River Ulrich (9-2, 182).

Nottingham has three returning place-winners in Kevin Meneus and Waleed Abouelela, who were both fourth a year ago, and Wroway Williams, who was sixth.

Abouelela is 14-4 this year at 145, with his only loss to a Mercer County wrestler coming against Hamilton West's Anthony Kubish. Williams is 15-2 at 195 and Meneus is 10-6 at 220.

Other top wrestlers for the Swamprats are Hector Davila (125, 120/126), Justin Dempsey (13-4, 132), Josh Magee (13-4, 106) and Jancel Nunez (15-3, 170).

Hamilton West's Jared Staub, a two-time state qualifier, was fourth last season while Kubish was sixth. Staub is 11-1 this season, with his only setback coming to Steinert's Michel. Kubish is 9-2 and Darius Miller (152) is 8-2 to lead the Hornets.