



WALTON-VERONA BEARCATS HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

A Tradition of Excellence

28 REGION CHAMPIONS

91 STATE QUALIFIERS

46 STATE PLACERS

2 GIRLS STATE PLACERS

9 STATE CHAMPIONS

November 14, 2023

After an 8th consecutive top 10 finish at the single class KHSAA state wrestling championships, the Bearcats enter the 2023-24 season ranked just outside the top 10 after sending another grappler to compete for the Thomas More Saints (Hunter Isaacs). But expectations remain high for our wrestling team with a couple of exciting new additions to the coaching staff.

Dave Johnson – Coach Johnson has been coaching high school wrestling for 20 years in multiple states and has been a fixture in Northern Ky for the last decade with time as head coach at Cooper and Covington Catholic (starting the program from scratch) as well as time as an assistant coach at Ryle. His wide range of experience with brand new teams as well as coaching state title contenders will be a great asset to help us continue to build the program here at WV.

Keegan Duncan – Coach Duncan is a teacher at Walton-Verona Elementary School and will bring some youthful energy to the team. He is a 2016 graduate of Trinity High School as a 2-time state champion and 5-time state placer and went on to wrestle at the Division 1 level at Gardner-Webb University.

Both Coach Johnson and Coach Duncan are tremendous additions to the staff at WVHS and will bring a ton of value both on the mat and off the mat. I encourage everyone to introduce yourselves to the new coaches and get to know these great guys.

The Bearcat wrestling team typically has a relatively small roster that relies on a lot of youngsters to fill starting roles, but we have a ton of talent with the potential to compete with all of the big schools in the region and around the state. We have produced 8 individual state titles and 4 state runner-ups in the last 7 seasons and we believe a lot more is on the way.

A quick look at the roster:

Seniors:

Liam Bird – after many, many years away from the mat, Liam joined the team last year as a junior and quickly started picking up technique. He was able to battle to a 6th place finish at region last year, but should finish his senior year at the horse park.

Jonny Seibert – new guy coming in from the football team and making a senior run at the sport. If the first few days of practice are any indication Jonny will surprise a lot of people this season.

TJ Sulfsted – TJ has been rolling around on wrestling mats his entire life. Before he moves on to compete for Mount Saint Joseph, he will look to finally get that podium finish after finishing 6 minutes short last year.

Aiden Svec – Aiden came back to wrestling last year as a junior and competed a bit undersized for the team at 113. Now that he has his feet under him technically on the mat and has grown a little we expect a big year from Aiden.

Ben Teipe – Ben has been wrestling for a long time as well, but moving up to heavyweight last year and eliminating weight concerns from his mind opened up a new side to Ben on the mat. While it appears as though he has continued to grow and grow, he is actually lighter and in better shape this year. Ben will be a huge part of making our heavyweights the strength of this team (something very new for WV).

Juniors: Carter Daniels, CJ Holt, Luke Hyden, Tyler Kennedy, TJ Meyer, Gavin Vonhandorf, Ben Walton

Sophomores: Michael Dearing, Brayden Donato

Freshmen: Joseph Baum, Brennen East

Middle Schoolers: Boone Sawyer, Oliver Pfeffer, Caleb Kirby

Another new and exciting development for WVHS and the wrestling program is the addition of a girls wrestling team. This year will be the inaugural year of a sanctioned KHSAA girls state wrestling championship and WV will be part of the history. And like our boys team, the girls don't plan to just be participants. We will be bringing some hammers, including returning state runner-up Sophie Anderson, to the season ready to battle for medals and titles at the horse park in February. The first head coach for the girls program will be Jason Moore who has been with the WV wrestling program since 2014 and will continue to work with the boys as well. Be on the lookout for more information and opportunities to cheer on and support the new girls team this year.

Juniors: Sophie Anderson, Rebecca McCray

Sophomores: Emma Moore

Middle Schoolers: Emily Stephenson

The season will be kicking off soon for the Bearcats as the girls will head to Lexington for the Centre Parkway Classic at Tates Creek on November 25. The boys will open up at home with the Bearcat Brawl on December 2.

The following Bearcat wrestlers begin the preseason ranked in the top 25 of their weight class as the team is ranked #11 in the state:

17th @ 106 lbs: Freshman Brennen East (13-5 last season with a regional runner-up finish)

2nd @ 132 lbs: Junior TJ Meyer (41-3 last season and finished as state runner-up for the second year in a row)

7th @ 138 lbs: Senior TJ Sulfsted (31-16 last season and finished 2nd at Region to qualify for state)

22nd @ 165 lbs: Junior Tyler Kennedy (21-13 last season finishing 6th at Region)

15th @ 175 lbs: Junior Ben Walton (24-10 last season with a 3rd place finish at Region to qualify for state)

1st @ 215 lbs: Junior Luke Hyden (35-13 last season finishing 4th at State)

14th @ 285 lbs: Senior Ben Teipe (15-7 last season with a 3rd place finish at Region to qualify for state)

Stay tuned for information on home meets and updates on rankings, schedules, and results! Follow us on social media:

Twitter (@WV_Wrestling1) and Instagram (@wv_bearcats_wrestling)

WALTON-VERONA ALUMNI ON THE COLLEGE MATS



Hunter Isaacs (class of 2023) – Thomas More University (141 pounds), first year



Isaac Thornton (class of 2022) – Indiana University (133 pounds)



Zach Watson (class of 2022) – Thomas More University (197 pounds)



Spencer Moore (class of 2021) – University of North Carolina (125 pounds), finished 4th at the 2022 ACC Championships as a true freshman; currently ranked #25 nationally in D1



Daulton Mayer (class of 2020) – Thomas More University (285 pounds), 3x NAIA National All American, currently ranked #8 nationally in D2



Ryan Moore (class of 2018) – Thomas More University (transfer - Cornell University) (149 pounds), 3x NAIA National Runner-up, currently ranked #8 nationally in D2