

THE DECATUR DAILY

Democrat Sports



Photo by Kris Everett

Brooklyn Bixler (above) and Alison Smith (below) represented South Adams at Friday's state track and field meet at Ben Davis High School in Indianapolis.



Photo by Kris Everett

FORMER BLUFFTON ADMINISTRATOR BECOMES HEAD OF IHSAA FOUNDATION

INDIANAPOLIS—School City of Mishawaka Superintendent Wayne Barker has been appointed a 3-year term to serve on the Board of Directors for the IHSAA Foundation.

Barker will replace former Whitko Community Schools Superintendent Dr. Brandon Penrod.

Barker, a long-time educator at Bluffton High School, became the School City of Mishawaka Superintendent on July 1, 2019. He was the 2018 District VI Superintendent of the Year. He served 15 years as a head boys basketball coach at Bluffton,



WAYNE BARKER

including time as President of the Indiana Basketball Coaches Association. He also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame.

Barker joins Tina Bennett from Clarksville Community Schools and Dr. Nikki Woodson at the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township (North Central High School) as the other member-school superintendents on the IHSAA Foundation Board.



Photo by Dane Fuelling

Andy Oberlin (left) and Wade McClurg are expanding past the head coaching position to attempt to build up the sport of folkstyle wrestling in the city of Fort Wayne and surrounding area of Northeast Indiana



Photo by Dane Fuelling

Building wrestling in the Fort

TWO COACHES READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN NORTHEAST INDIANA

By DANE FUELLING
Decatur Daily Democrat

Decades ago, the stretch of land from Fort Wayne to Muncie was the heart of high school wrestling in Indiana. Storied programs like Belmont, Delta and the now-shuttered high schools of Muncie South and Muncie North won 11 of the twenty-one state championships from 1974 to 1994. Since Belmont's title in 1994, the area has fallen behind the rest of the state. While plenty of wrestling fans around the state like to talk about the struggles of the Fort Wayne area, two men have taken big steps in their lives to put actions where others will only speak words.

Wade McClurg has been hired to a new dual position in the Indiana Tech athletic program. He will simultaneously be assistant coach for the Warrior program and the head of its new Warrior Regional Training Center. "With the Warrior RTC," says McClurg, "we have an opportunity to positively impact hundreds of boys and girls in the Fort Wayne community and surrounding area through the sport of wrestling. In return, we will not only have the ability to produce elite athletes, but we will strive to form servant-leaders and mold outstanding individuals through the world's oldest and greatest sport."

On the other side of town, coach Andy Oberlin has opened a

new wrestling-focused facility on Goshen Road, not far from the Zoo in Fort Wayne. Oberlin has invested much of his own personal money and time into a venture that has no guarantee of success. It is a new idea for the city, a place for clubs and teams to host camps, retreats and for visiting coaches to hold clinics.

Oberlin has hooked up with ONE for sponsorship and his facility has new wall mats and wrestling mats being installed this week. He has enlisted the help of Anton Talamantes, one of the city's all-time wrestling greats, to host the very first clinic at his facility. That will take place on June 12th.

Coach McClurg was a graduate of Beech Grove High School in Indianapolis who went on to wrestle for the Greyhounds of the University of Indianapolis. In five years at the helm of the Roncalli program, McClurg won 84 duals with 18 losses and had 17 state qualifiers, including three state champions. He qualified for Team State in his final four seasons and won a semi-state title in 2019.

With all that time spent on the south side of Indy, moving to Fort Wayne will be a big change for the coach. A state of the art, 25,000 square feet facility was a good place to start.

For Oberlin, Fort Wayne is home and since wrestling against two-time state champion Tim

Myers multiple times in his high school career at DeKalb High School, Oberlin has also seen the drop in competitiveness in the area.

"The question is whether we have gotten worse or everyone else has gotten better," says Oberlin. "But I think it is a combination of both."

Oberlin feels that the strong group of wrestlers out of Griffith High School in the early 2000s, which included current IU head coach Angel Escobedo, transformed high school wrestling in Indiana and created a new, higher ceiling.

"We have so many more kids competing nationally," he says. "Just look at how many D1 wrestlers we have produced now. Things are so much more competitive now than they were 25 years ago."

Both Oberlin and McClurg see potential for the sport in the state's largest school district, Fort Wayne Community Schools.

"Kids today need to see some success to get hooked on the sport," declares Oberlin. "And when you try to get them to start the sport in high school, there isn't much of a chance for success against experienced wrestlers. We need to change that."

McClurg's program will open in September, and with established men's and women's wrestling teams at the school, things might just be looking up for wrestling in our area.



Photo by Dane Fuelling

The Indiana Tech wrestling room in Fort Wayne will be the new home for coach Wade McClurg and his regional training center.

GOLF SECTIONALS

COMPLETED ACROSS STATE

The IHSAA wrapped up golf sectionals Monday, with three teams advancing from each of the 30 sectionals to this week's regional. Because golf is one of the few sports not played on school grounds, tournaments must be scheduled on public or private courses. For this reason, the five golf regionals will be held either Thursday or Friday this week. The top three teams will compete at the State Finals on June 15th and 16th in Carmel.

IHSAA Golf Sectionals

At Westfield (Ulen) Par 70

1. Carmel 295

2. Zionsville 295

3. Guerin Catholic 299

At SB Riley (Erskine) Par 70

1. Penn 327

2. SB St. Joseph 343

3. Mishawaka Marian 373

At Peru (Rock Hollow)

1. Kokomo 328

2. Maconaquah 331

3. Lewis Cass 349

At Noblesville (Fox Prairie) Par 71

1. Fishers 307

2. Hamilton Southeastern 308

3. Tipton 314

At Monroe Central (Hickory Hills) Par 70

1. Monroe Central 307

2. Yorktown 324

3. Delta 336

At Greenfield Central (Hawk's Trail) Par 72

1. Mt. Vernon (Fortville) 315

2. New Castle 319

3. New Palestine 330

At Richmond (Forest Hills)

1. Richmond 328

2. Connersville 342

3. Union County 351

At Indianapolis Crispus Attucks (South Grove)

1. Brebeuf Jesuit 303

2. Covenant Christian 314

3. Decatur Central 368

At Linton-Stockton (Phil Harris) Par 71

1. Terre Haute North 310

2. Terre Haute South 316

3. Northview 327

At Franklin Community (Legends) Par 72

1. Center Grove 304

2. Franklin Community 315

3. Greenwood Christian 332

At Martinsville

1. Brownsburg 316

2. Avon 327

3. Plainfield 342

At Bloomington North (Cascades) Par 71

1. Bloomington South 288

2. Bedford North Lawrence 301

3. Bloomington North 315

At Madison (Sunrise)

1. Austin 320

2. Madison 322

3. Henryville 343

At Providence (Covered Bridge) Par 72

1. Silver Creek 306

2. Floyd Central 316

3. North Harrison 331



Ike Ruble and his teammates will need not only a rangefinder, but also the help and advice of their coach, Keith Blythe, who has plenty of regional golf experience himself, if they are to advance to the state finals this week. The Braves travel to the Players Club in Muncie Thursday.