



# THE CALIFORNIA WRESTLER

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## 2021-2022 PRESEASON STATE RANKINGS

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Welcome to a new season!

For the preseason rankings, a ton of prep work takes place to aggregate and process all the data points – and I also cross-check with over 100+ coaches to ensure the accuracy of projected weights and line-ups. During the season, the rankings are updated weekly, culminating in a final version (560 wrestlers) for the CIF State Tournament. The final ranking set is used to **seed the top 16** for each of the 40-person state brackets.

As way of background, I've committed to the rankings at the state-level since 2011 and the resource I provide is readily available to the entire wrestling community. The rankings are also used by multiple national ranking platforms and dozens of college programs across divisions for their ongoing recruiting efforts. I'm happy to do it and – in face of just about everyone moving to monthly/annual subscription models – free of charge. I've also taken ownership of *The California Wrestler* in late 2020 and despite ongoing issues with the site, I'll look to relaunch in the coming weeks.

The previous season in CA was mostly wrecked by COVID, so putting together an initial list has been a challenge with limited results for many competitors – I'll keep scrubbing the lists going forward as I'm sure there are listed kids who are no longer competing or at very different weights. Don't worry too much where kids are positioned at the starting line – the rankings will be updated frequently so there will certainly be significant moves up-and-down and across weights by mid-December.

There are nearly 24,000 wrestlers on the boys' side in CA, which represents over 10% of the national total. In the rankings, I will list the **top 40 wrestlers** + several honorable mentions (HM). Across 14 weight classes, **over 700 competitors** are listed, which may seem like a large number but still less than 3% of the total wrestling population in our state. As the season progresses, more names will be added to the list – typically each weight will max out at 60 wrestlers. Competitors will be slotted at what I consider projected weights – the question I ask is: if there was a hypothetical state tournament to be held a month from now, where would each guy go?

**I'll be the first to say rankings do not matter** but I believe it's a good thing to have a centralized, data-driven resource that accurately tracks the state's top wrestlers. There's also a predictive nature to the rankings. Observing four-year statistics (2017-2020), of the 448 eventual state medalists, 421 were top 12 seeds (94%) and 436

were top 16 seeds (97%). Looking back 10 years, 92% (924 of 1008) of eventual state medalists were seeded/ranked in the top 12 and 96% (968 of 1008) were in the top 16 on the final list. Not too shabby.

Now the nitty-gritty. **Seeding/ranking criteria** tries to be consistent with those applied at most tournaments – among them: (1) head-to-head results (H2H), prioritizing most recent match-up if H2Hs are even; (2) returning state medalist or qualifier; (3) returning section medalist; (4) common opponents; (5) quality of tournament schedule. An important consideration is overall body of work as case-by-case discretion must be made when H2Hs conflict or are lacking or competitors move up-and-down in weight. This also places more emphasis on late-season or “big tournament” performance rather than rely purely on earlier results.

Also, the margins separating wrestlers outside the top 20-plus is very slim – so unless there’s compelling evidence to bump a wrestler higher, don’t be discouraged. In my opinion, little differentiates a #20 from a #35 or even HM. I try to maintain a good distribution across sections but the rankings will skew representation from more dominant ones (Central, Southern, Sac Joaquin). Finally, if a team has a quality “B” wrestler or if the starting spot is undecided between two state-level teammates, I will list both – however, the “B” will be “HM” even though he may be a top 20 competitor.

As a final word, unfortunately, I simply don’t have the capacity to produce a comparable girls’ state ranking. If there were 26 hours in a day, I certainly would give it a go. But with only 24, I can only do so much. There are folks who provide “official” state rankings and seeds for the gals so I must defer to their capabilities. Perhaps they will release something in the coming weeks.

I welcome feedback, questions, or corrections at [castateranker@gmail.com](mailto:castateranker@gmail.com).