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Guest Editorial

By Bill Grant

Eight Annual Wrestling USA/Cliff Keen Athletic Dream Team Classic Dual Meet

For the first time in the history of the Wrestling USA/Cliff Keen Dream Team Classic, the competition will be held on the West Coast. On Saturday, March 27th Clovis West High School will host the 8th Annual United States Dream Team vs California dual meet. The Central Valley of California has a rich tradition in amateur wrestling that dates back to the early 1950's. Continuing this tradition have been two high school powerhouses, Clovis and Clovis West high schools that have won a combined total of 9 California state championships. Incredibly sophisticated, organized and administratively backed elementary and middle school feeder programs along with dedicated parent booster clubs and knowledgeable local fans, make the city of Clovis THE hot bed of wrestling in a state that boasts 715 high school wrestling programs in a one-division state championship tournament.

Three returning state champions hope to lead this senior class to victory over the USA star-studded lineup - Nathan Morgan from Bakersfield High, Troy Trapelle from Clovis and Chris Martinez from Clovis West High. Some have compared this Golden State senior class with the 1996 powerhouse crew that boasted eventual NCAA champions Stephen Abas, Adam Tirapelle and Mark Munoz.

Coaching the USA Dream Team will be a former California high school wrestler at Upland High School and currently the head coach at Brandon High School in Florida, Russ Cozart. Coach Cozart holds the National Record for most consecutive dual wins with 301 and counting. He has coached 44 state champions, 112 state placers and his teams have won 13 state titles. Coaching Team California will be Poway High School's Wayne Branstetter, assisted by the coaches of the top four finishing teams in our state championships in March.

Host coaches Jeff Roberts and Dennis Bardsley have created a web site to provide detailed information for interested fans - <http://dreamteamwarp.com/>. Dream Team Classic T-Shirts are available on this site. Dennis can be reached by Email at: dbards@comcast.net.

The host hotel for the 8th Annual Dream Team Classic will be the Picadilly Inn University Hotel in Fresno (559) 224-4200. 🏨

Asics First Team All-American Robbie Preston, Team New Jersey (red), vs. Oklahoma State Champion Brandon Shelton, Team Oklahoma. Shelton won by a fall in 2:47. Photo by Robert Preston.



NATIONAL ACTION WRESTLING PHOTO CONTEST

Send your best action wrestling photos. The best photos will be recognized each issue. The outstanding color photo will be featured on the cover, poster or T-shirt. Cover photos to be submitted as 5x7 print.