

By Todd Irwin

District 6 Historian

The District 6 Hall of Fame will induct 12, which is its biggest class ever, before the finals of the District 6 Class AA Tournament on Feb. 14 and the Class AAA Tournament on Feb. 21 at the Altoona Fieldhouse.

The class ranges from the first state champion from District 6, State College's Charles Ridenour, who won the 115-pound title in 1939, to Mount Union's Thad Stewart, who won the 126-pound state title in 1982. The District 6 Hall of Fame Committee also voted in 1947 Philipsburg High School state champs Dick Bainey and Mike Comitz, Lock Haven High School state champs Ed Draucker (1940) and Lee Deitrick (1961), Bald Eagle-Nittany state champ Adam Waltz (1962), Tyrone state champ John Dickson (1944) and Bellefonte state champ Joe Masullo (1949). Contributors Norman Palovcsik and Bill Wilt will go in, as will 1958 Moshannon Valley grad Vic Stanley, the current coach at LaSalle College High School in the Philadelphia Catholic League who entered the 2008-2009 season with 414 career wins.

The following is a capsule look of the inductees:

Dick Bainey, Philipsburg (wrestler): Bainey won a District 6-9 title and became Philipsburg's first state champion by winning the 95-pound title, and in the process didn't give up a point in the 1947 state tournament. He beat Erie Academy's Alan Pancerev, 3-0, in the finals to finish his senior season with a 15-1-1 record.

Mike Comitz, Philipsburg (wrestler): Comitz won a District 6-9 title and became Philipsburg's second state champion by beating Kingston's Tom Hoeschele, 4-1, in the 145-pound finals of the 1947 state tournament. He finished his senior season with a 15-0-1 record and his career with a 26-2-1 record.

Lee Deitrick, Lock Haven (wrestler): Deitrick won a state title at 133 in 1961, defeating Burgettstown's Dino Boni, 3-3, 1-0 in overtime in the finals. He was a two-time District 6 champion and Central Northwestern Regional champion in 1961. He became an All-American at the University of Michigan by placing fifth at 147 in the 1965 NCAA Championships.

John Dickson, Tyrone (wrestler): After winning a District 6-9 title, he won a state title at 145 pounds in 1944, beating Canonsburg's returning state champion Tony George, 7-6, in the quarterfinals. He beat Bethlehem's returning state runner-up Stan Thevenet, 6-3, in the finals.

Ed Draucker, Lock Haven (wrestler): Draucker won a District 6-9 title and became Lock Haven's first state champion by pinning Forty Fort's returning state runner-up Bob Bach in 1:56 of overtime in the 105-pound finals of the 1940 state tournament.

Joe Masullo, Bellefonte (wrestler): Masullo won a District 6-9 title and then handed Forty Fort's Sam Coursen his fourth state finals loss with a 7-5 win in the 112-pound finals of the 1949 tournament. In the semifinals, he earned a 7-1 win over Shamokin's Ken Faust, who would eventually win two state titles.

Norman Palovcsik (contributor): A 1968 Clearfield state champion and three-time letterman at Penn State, Palovcsik is the current principal at Central Mountain Middle School and former principal at Bald Eagle-Nittany. He's been

publisher of the Pennsylvania Wrestling Round-Up since 1981 and was co-editor with Jim Butler of the Keystone Wrestling Rankings. He was voted into the Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1999, and he was voted District 6 Man of the Year in 1992. He's the King of the Mountain tournament director and PWCA Hall of Fame chairman.

Charles Ridenour, State College (wrestler): A District 6-9 champion, Ridenour became the first state champion from District 6 when he beat Abington's Roy Zackey in the 115-pound finals in 1939. He went on to wrestle at Penn State, where he won three EIWA titles in 1941, 1942 and 1943 and became an All-American in 1942 by placing third at the NCAA Championships.

Vic Stanley (coach): A 1958 Moshannon Valley graduate and 1962 Lock Haven graduate, Stanley was voted into the Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1995. He's also in the Lock Haven University Hall of Fame and the Council Rock Hall of Fame. The Current coach at LaSalle College High School in the Philadelphia Catholic League, he had a 414-155-4 career record, including a 263-82-5 record at Council Rock. Stanley was voted PIAA Class AAA Coach of the Year in 1977.

Thad Stewart, Mount Union (wrestler): As a junior, Stewart captured a state title in 1982, beating Mahanoy Area's previously unbeaten Gary Sanchez, 5-3, in the 126-pound finals to finish with a 35-0 record. He was a state runner-up in 1983, falling to Mifflinburg's Kurt Rudy, 10-9, in the 132-pound finals. He was a two-time regional champion in 1982 and 1983 and a two-time district champion in 1982 and 1983. Stewart was voted the District 6 Class AA Outstanding Wrestler in 1983.

Adam Waltz, Bald Eagle-Nittany (wrestler): Waltz captured two District 6 titles in 1961 and 1962, a Central Northwestern Regional title in 1962 and a state title in 1962, beating Bethlehem's Dave Clery, 6-4, in the 138-pound finals. He was George Custer's third state champion.

Bill Wilt (contributor): Wilt was 101-90 as head coach at United from 1966 to 1982 and served on the District 6 committee for 13 years. He was a founding member of the Appalachian Conference.