



Reed Hoffmann Democrat and Chronicle

Mike Cronmiller from Edison (right) came out of match against Cardinal Mooney with a pin for his 21st victory without a loss this season. The senior, who hopes to defend his Section 5 crown and then be the first wrestler from a Rochester city school to win a state championship, has compiled a career record of 86-11.

## Edison's Cronmiller ready to take final step

By Gary Fallesen

Democrat and Chronicle

City youths are reknowned for basketball and boxing skills. Not wrestling.

The rap against them is that their quickness is limited to the basketball court and boxing ring. They are not known for speed within the class room.

Then there is Mike Cronmiller.

A senior at Edison, he supersedes those stereotypes.

Cronmiller is an honor student, and one of the state's better high school wrestlers.

"He wants to be good at what he does," Edison Coach Frank Mielnicki said yesterday. "That's what it takes to

145-pound senior wrestler has chance to be city schools' first state champion because of extra work over summer

be a champion.

"Most kids in the city wrestle for three months and that's it," the 27th-year coach added. "To be good you've got to go to summer camps, and wrestle in spring and summer tournaments."

That is what Cronmiller has done.

Last summer, for example, he wrestled in 105 bouts — more than he has

wrestled in four seasons at Edison.

"We don't have as much competition as the county," said Cronmiller. "Practices aren't as intense either. I feel, in a sense, it's easier.

"What has helped me is wrestling during the summer," the 145-pounder added. "It's just the experience of being on the mat. When you start out wres-

ting you don't know what to do. You're thinking, 'What do I do next? What do I do next?' Now what I do is only natural."

Winning comes naturally to Cronmiller. He is 21-0 this season and 86-11 on the varsity. He is a reigning Section 5 Class A champion who hopes to qualify in two weeks for a second straight New York State Public High School Athletic Association tournament bid.

"I want to win the states," said Cronmiller, the oldest son of Monroe Community College Coach Mike Cronmiller Sr. "I want to be the first state champ from Edison."

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# Cronmiller is ready for the final step

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No city wrestler ever has won a state wrestling title. In fact, no city wrestler ever has made the NYSPHSAA finals.

The best finish by a city wrestler is fourth place.

Mielnicki had two individuals — 119-pound John LaBoy and 126-pound Art Killings — place fourth in the state in 1971. East's 250-pound Tom Kennard (1975) and 155-pound Len Barber (1978) also placed fourth in the state.

Few individuals from the city have even advanced to the state tournament in recent years.

Cronmiller did so last season in the 138-pound weight class. Once there, he was defeated in the quarterfinals by eventual champion Michael Arena of Section 8 (Nassau County). Cronmiller finished his junior year with a 30-2 record and a desire to return to the state tournament.

"I've had kids win the sectionals and I've had two kids take fourth in the states," said Mielnicki, "but overall Mike is the best wrestler I've ever had. For takedowns, riding, escapes and confidence. He has a great determination to win."

Cronmiller displayed his mat savvy yesterday with a pin at 2:27 of the bout against Cardinal Mooney's Dominic Antonucci.

His team lost, however, 36-24. It was Edison's 10th loss in 14 meets.

"When I was a freshman it didn't really matter to me to be on a good wrestling team," said Cronmiller. "I didn't think I'd be

any better."

He wanted to attend Edison to study in the computer program. There, he has maintained a 'B' average while lettering in three sports (soccer, wrestling and tennis). Next year he will attend MCC to wrestle for his father.

"Now I sort of wish I could be on a team with a winning record," he said.

Cronmiller, a bronze medalist at the 1984 Empire State Games, does not let his team's 3-10-1 record get him down, though. He is, after all, a team captain.

"Michael's a worker," said Mielnicki. "He's the type of kid who tries to make these other kids better. When we go back to fundamentals he does them (the drills) over and over. He doesn't get bored."

"When he started (as a freshman) you could see he had potential," Mielnicki said. "The little extra he did outside of school was the difference."

His father, the wrestling coach, also has helped.

"He helps me out with the mental part of it," said Cronmiller, the wrestler. "Like, handling the pressure. He says, 'Don't worry about losing.'"

"Last year I never thought about not making it to the states," he added. "I set the high goal of going to the states. I kept on thinking, 'I'm going to make it.' That's the way I'm thinking this year. I just want to do my best."

Cronmiller's best could be the best ever by a wrestler from a city school.