

Eight teams to compete

★ AHS holiday mat tournament appears to be well balanced

Indications point to one of the most evenly matched Auburn Invitational Wrestling Tournaments ever when eight schools take the mats at the Auburn High gymnasium Thursday.

There are unknowns plus perennial powers participating in the event but not

included are Rush-Henrietta and Indian River which shared the tournament championship last year.

Of the teams, Sandy Creek, which finished third last year, and East Syracuse-Minoa appear to be the early favorites but there are a pair of darkhorses in Corning East and

Bishop McQuaid.

Corning made a good showing last year with a relatively young team while this will be the first time in the tournament for McQuaid.

Also entered are Newark, Baldwinsville, Mynderse Academy and the host Maroons of Auburn High.

ES-M finished fourth in the tournament last year while Mynderse was fifth, AHS sixth and Corning East seventh. Baldwinsville has been in the tournament in the past but will not be entering its entire team in this tournament as the powerful squad is being split between two tournaments to give more boys a chance for strong competition. Newark is also a first timer in the local event.

This is the 14th year of the local mat tournament which is one of the longest runs of any such event in the area.

There are two champions returning along with four boys who finished second last year.

Tim Nellis of Sandy Creek, who captured the 100-pound title last year, will be competing at 107 while the man he defeated in the finals, Jeff Converse of Mynderse has moved up to 114. Doug Goodfellow of E.S.-M won a hard earned overtime decision in the finals last year at 114 and is at the same weight again this year meaning a possible matchup between him and Converse.

Auburn's Steve McCormick will be trying to get back into the winner's circle as he captured the 138-pound title in the tournament two years ago then was second at 154 last year. He will probably be competing at 167 Thursday.

Tim Hathaway of SC was pinned by AHS's Joe Alberti in the 121-pound finals last year and will be trying at 128 this year. Ed Whalen of E.S.-M was second in the heavyweight division last year but will be trying to improve just one place in the same division while teammate Vince Gerace will be trying to do likewise after he lost the 128-pound finals last year with a shot at 135 this year.

It is expected the competition in each of the 12 weight classes will be extremely close with strong entries included in each. For a boy to become champion he will have to win three bouts during the day.

First round matches will be conducted on two mats beginning at noon and this will be followed by consolation and semi-final bouts.

The matches for third place will commence at 6:30 p.m. and be followed immediately by the finals. Trophies will be presented to the individual champions and the best school, plus an award for the most valuable wrestler.

Sandy Creek is a small school which competes in the Frontier League which has both A and B leagues for its wrestlers. Included in the top flighters for coach Roy Hunt are: 100-pounder John Hunkins who was undefeated in junior high competition and was named as the outstanding wrestler at the Speculator Wrestling Camp; Nellis went on to capture the league title last year and was third place finisher in the sectionals; John Clark, 114, was third in both the local tournament and Section III, Class D finals last year; Steve Jones, the 121 pound matman, was second in the league B tournament last year.

Joining Converse as outstanding matmen for Mynderse are 147-pounder Lynn Chuley and 167-pounder Tim Bentley.

McQuaid has six possible champs at 100 with John Heyer, Tim Bayer at 119 and Kevin Dowd at 138, all of them being undefeated thus far this year. Also potential winners are: 155-pounder Jim Walther and his brother John at 167, and Steve O'Hora at 177. The Knights are undefeated in dual competition in the rough Rochester area this season.

Auburn's only other real hope will probably be Mark Prentice at 147.