

Forged in Illinois

The Unmatched Pipeline
of American Greco-Roman
Wrestling.

A Curated Historical Dossier (Grassroots to Gold)



33

All-Time Junior National Team Titles

The unrivaled Fargo
grassroots incubator.



6+

Senior World Team Members

Transitioning domestic
dominance to international dirt.



9

Homegrown Olympians

From Farina (1976) to the
dual-threat of Paris 2024.

Tier I: The Fargo Dynasty

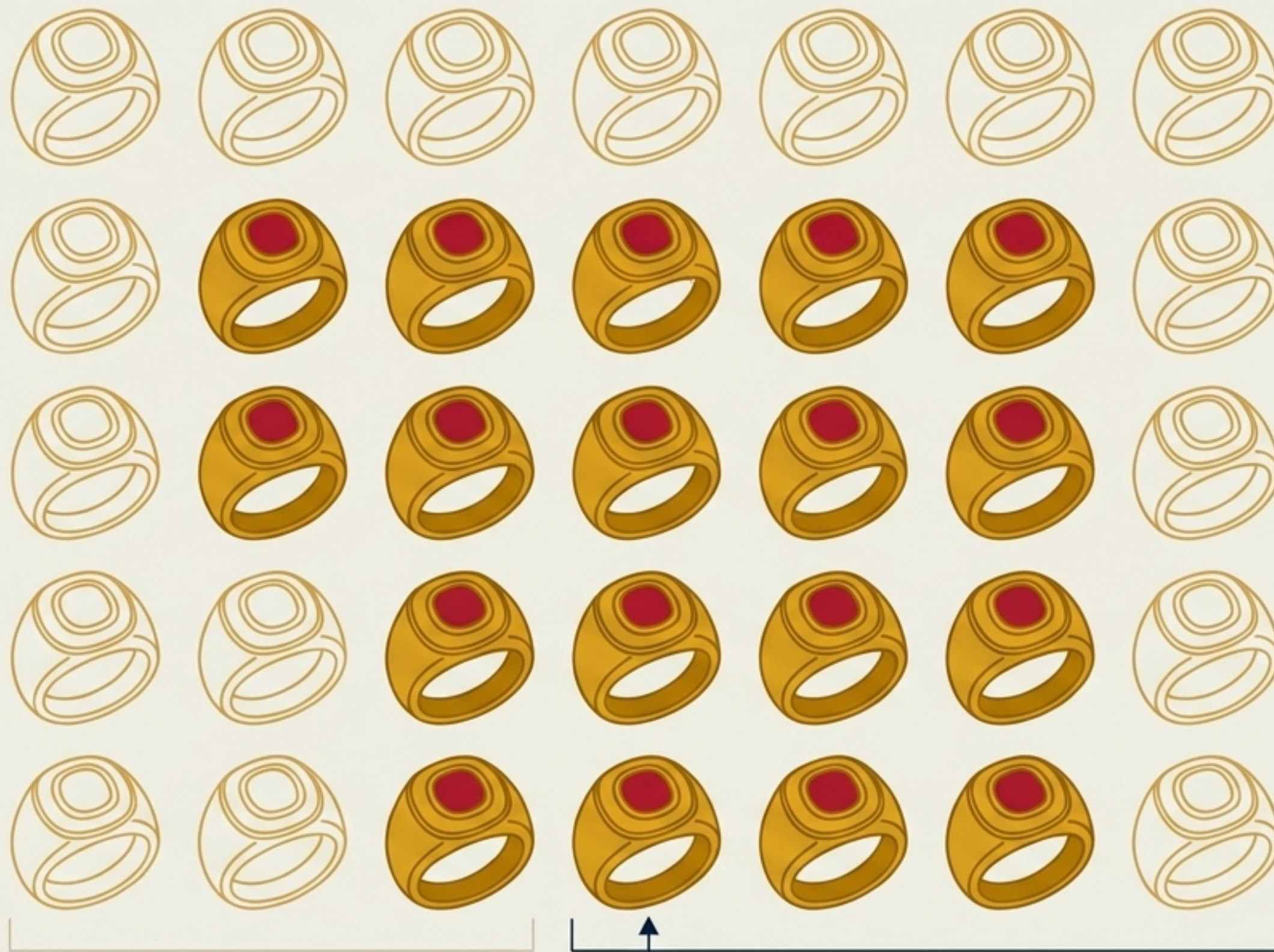
33 All-Time Championships Since 1971

USA Wrestling recognizes 1971 as the inception of the Junior Nationals. Illinois' standing is tracked via two verified methodologies:

The Inclusive Count (33 Titles):

Incorporates officially scored team titles and derived historical results dating back to 1972.

The Official Era (17 Titles): The modern standard of strictly published Greco-Roman team champion standings.



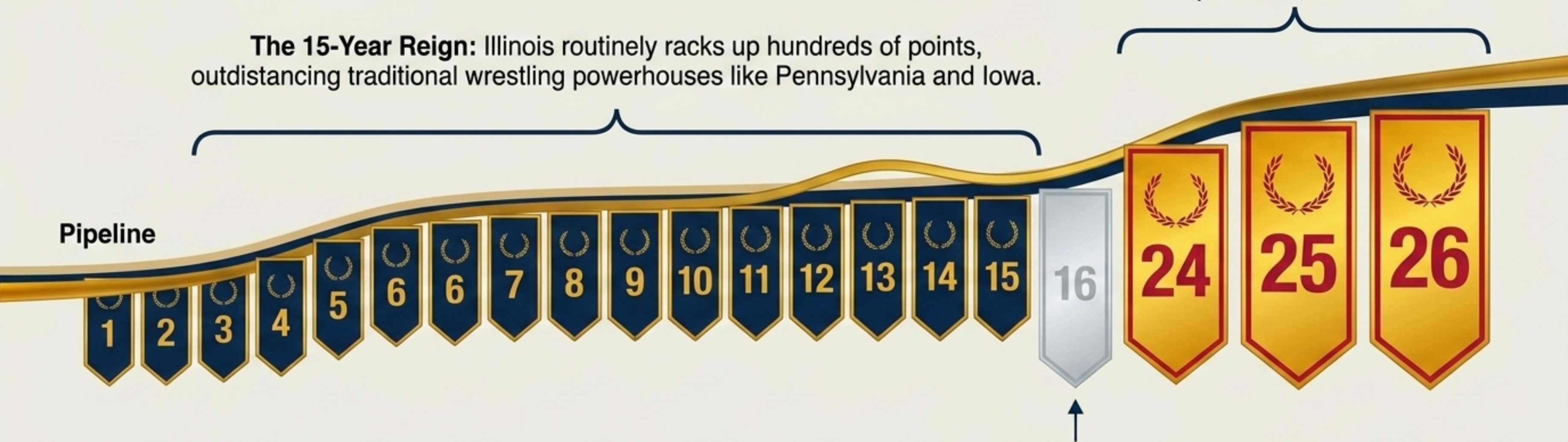
33 Inclusive Historical Titles

17 Official Era Titles

The 16-of-17 Modern Run

The 15-Year Reign: Illinois routinely racks up hundreds of points, outdistancing traditional wrestling powerhouses like Pennsylvania and Iowa.

The Vengeance Tour (2024–2026): Illinois responds with a furious three-peat, culminating in a historic 249-point blowout in 2026.



The 2023 Anomaly: Idaho captures its first-ever Fargo team title. (Note: Illinois still won the combined team standings that year via a massive 319-point overall Greco effort).

Inside the Grassroots Machine: Hardware & Milestones

190 Points

The 2025 Margin

Illinois crowns four Junior individual champions (Pratt, Medlin, DeMarco, Hoffer) and mints 12 All-Americans, easily doubling runner-up Utah's 89 points.

249 Points

The 2026 Blowout

Illinois secures its 17th official championship with overwhelming depth and a relentless point margin.

Triple Crown

Cressell (190 lbs)

In 2026, Cressell becomes only the 10th wrestler in Junior Boys history to secure the elusive Triple Crown.

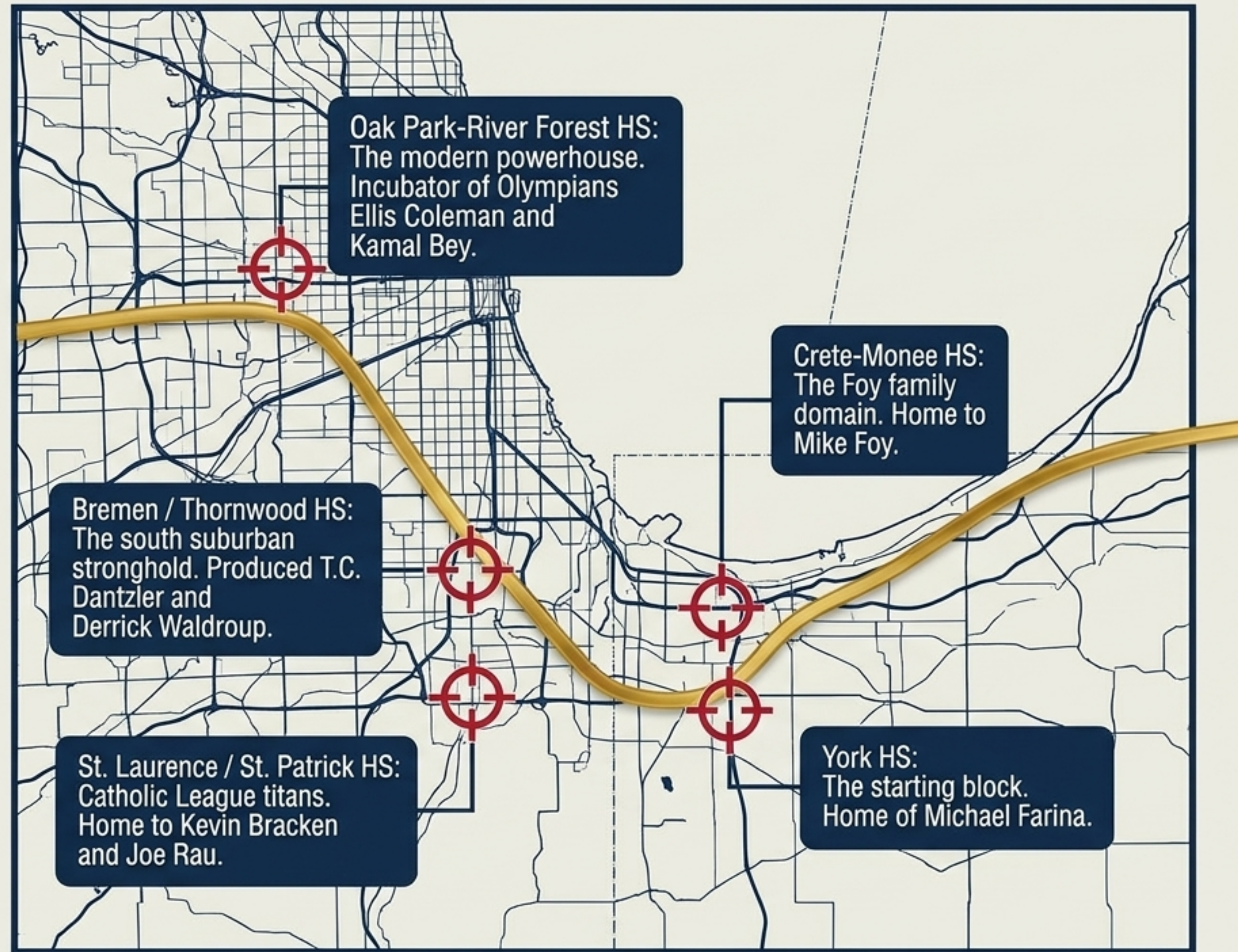
48 Seconds

Giovanni Nix (88 lbs)

Records the fastest fall of the 2026 finals, pinning his opponent in just 48 seconds in the 16U division.

Geographic Hotbeds: The Roots of the Pipeline

The talent pipeline is an intensely localized ecosystem rooted in elite scholastic hubs.



Tier II: International Dirt (The Senior World Teams)



Lindsey Durlacher

Origin: Buffalo Grove

Stats: 2005, 2006, 2007 World Teams. Captured the Bronze Medal at the 2006 World Championships (55 kg). Helped lead the US to its first World team title in 2007.

Darrell Gholar

Origin: Dunbar Vocational

Stats: 1986 Team Captain. Placed 6th at 82 kg.

Max Nowry

Origin: Washington, IL

Stats: Three-time World Team member (2019, 2022, 2026).

Willie Williams

Origin: Bloom HS

Stats: Early era pioneer; 1970 and 1974 World Teams.

Tier III: The Olympic Roster Matrix

WRESTLER	HOMETOWN / HS	OLYMPIC GAMES	WEIGHT CLASS	CAREER MILESTONE
Michael Farina	Elmhurst (York)	1976 Montreal	48 kg	Youngest U.S. Greco Olympian
Mark Johnson	Rock Island (Alleman)	1980 Moscow	N/A	Boycott Qualifier
Michial "Mike" Foy	Crete (Crete-Monee)	'88 Seoul, '92 Barcelona	95 kg	1992 U.S. Team Captain, '89 World Silver
Derrick Waldroup	Chicago (Bremen)	1996 Atlanta	90 kg	Multiple Armed Forces Champion
Kevin Bracken	Chicago (St. Laurence)	2000 Sydney	63 kg	Placed 6th; Olympian Wrestling Club Coach
T.C. Dantzler	Harvey (Bremen/Thornwood)	2008 Beijing	74 kg	Resident Athlete at U.S. OTC
Ellis Coleman	Oak Park (OPRF)	2012 London	60 kg	5-time U.S. Open Champion
Joe Rau	Chicago (St. Patrick)	2024 Paris	97 kg	Qualified at age 33
Kamal Bey	Oak Park (OPRF)	2024 Paris	77 kg	2017 Junior World Champion

The Modern Standard Bearers (Paris 2024)



Kamal Bey

The Dynamic Force (77 kg)

Emerging from the Oak Park–River Forest incubator, Bey transitions from a 2017 Junior World Champion to a multi-time Senior World Team member before punching his ticket to Paris.



Joe Rau

The Resilient Veteran (97 kg)

A St. Patrick High School alumnus whose journey is defined by endurance. A Titan Mercury WC/Illinois RTC athlete who battled through multiple World Team cycles to secure his Olympic debut at age 33.

Synthesis: The Self-Sustaining Ecosystem

