

# Trail Trash

2016 OHSAA Boys High School  
Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler  
and on the net at [www.Davey1.com](http://www.Davey1.com)

*Featuring Commentary &  
Predictions by ...*

*The Swami*

Welcome to Trail Trash. We started doing this back in 1994. I believe it was Albert Einstein who defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. No disrespect to Albert because he was a pretty smart dude, but doing Trail Trash for twenty-three years is probably a better definition for the word.

The latest reclassification of schools based on enrollment numbers brings about some fairly significant changes for the 2016 tournament around Northwest Ohio. More on those changes later. Speaking of enrollment numbers and the divisions that teams play in, it was good to see the OHSAA push back implementation of their competitive balance plan to the '17-'18 basketball season. The "devil is in the details" so let us hope that some of the bugs and unanswered questions can

*Since 1994, Trail Trash has been published twice annually in conjunction with the state boys basketball tournament. In addition to tournament brackets, Trail Trash has included the expert predictions of the Swami. For those of you familiar with the Swami, we say no more. For the small number of you not familiar with the Swami, he is the self-proclaimed guru on Northwest Ohio high school hoops.*

*Since the fall of 2004 Davey1.com has featured the most complete collection of Ohio Boys High School Basketball Schedules and results that can be found in one place anywhere on the internet. We have gathered all of the schedules from the schools in the OHSAA Northwest District. We wrote our own special software using a Microsoft Access database to compile and display our schedules. Nowhere else will you find the amount of information that we present on Davey1.com.*

get worked out next year while the process is being piloted. There was more than enough controversy this past year when charter school numbers were initially factored into the enrollment numbers and resulting classifications before common sense eventually prevailed. Implementing the competitive balance plan will be a major undertaking. Please get it right.

As we approach tournament time, there have already been in-season coaching changes at Delta (December), Maumee Valley Country Day (January), and Monroeville (February). Don't know the circumstances, but it is unique to have that many changes during the basketball season. Since two of those came before the firing of David Blatt, we can't put these on LeBron.

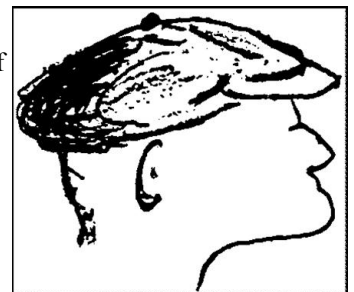
No more editorializing because it is time to break out the Ouija board and call in the soothsayers. Let's go to the predictions.

## DIVISION I

Once the dust had cleared and the new divisional assignments came out, there were only seventeen D1 schools in Northwest Ohio. With close to 200 schools in D1 statewide and only 16 spots in the regional tournament, do the math. For those seventeen D1 schools in NW Ohio, that means only one district tournament and one team going to the regional.

There is plenty of quality in D1 around NW Ohio. Lima Senior and Toledo St. John's Jesuit are clearly the class of the field. Lima Senior is undefeated while the three teams that have defeated St. John's (Lima Senior, Lima Central Catholic, Detroit Jesuit) have combined for one loss on the season. Eleven of the remaining fifteen teams in the district were at .500 or above at the time of the draw with Toledo Whitmer the best of that group. This should make for some great sectional games.

Toledo Central



Catholic returns as a sectional site while Lakota (you can't get there from anywhere) is the other site. Too bad Liberty-Benton isn't hosting. The district tournament will be held at the University of Toledo. The Toledo district champion will return to UT for a regional semifinal game against the Elyria Catholic district winner (Lorain, Elyria, Olmsted Falls). The UT winner will play the winner of the University of Akron regional semifinal between the Canton (Massillon Jackson, Canton McKinley, North Canton Hoover) and Copley (Brunswick, Medina, Akron Hoban) district winners. The regional final will be played at Akron.

Toledo Rogers was the last D1 team from Northwest Ohio to advance to the state tournament losing in the championship game to Mentor in 2013.

## SECTIONALS

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC: #1 Lima Senior and #3 Toledo Whitmer are the top seeds at the Sullivan Center. Other than the two nail-biters with St. John's and the buzzer beater to top Lima Central Catholic, the Spartans have for the most part breezed through the regular season. The Spartans are talented and deep. Mr. Basketball Xavier Simpson is averaging close to 30 points a night including games of 59 and 65 against Fremont Ross (X outscored Ross 124-111 in those games). Whitmer also is talented and deep but the Panthers haven't been able to beat Lima and SJJ in the TRAC. The Panthers gave Lima a run for their money in the rematch at Whitmer. Sylvania Southview, Anthony Wayne, and Perrysburg all have been among the contenders in a wild NLL race with all three still having a chance to get a piece of the title entering into the final week of the regular season. Ashland was the district runner-up to Lima Senior in 2015. Given the large number of teams in the district, Central will host a quarterfinal game between Fremont Ross and Toledo Start.

Quarterfinal – Toledo Start over Fremont Ross

Semifinals – Toledo Whitmer over Ashland; Toledo Bowsher over Sylvania Southview; Lima Senior over Toledo Start; Perrysburg over Anthony Wayne

Finals – Lima Senior over Perrysburg; Toledo Whitmer over Toledo Bowsher

LAKOTA: #2 Toledo St. John's and #4 Toledo St. Francis are the top seeds at Lakota. Eight teams make the journey to Lakota conveniently located on CR 32 near the intersection of CR 36 and CR 11 in Sandusky County. This is a very good St. John's team. SJ's Ed Heintschel is in his thirty-seventh year coaching and is fast approaching 700 career wins. The Titans have won eighteen consecutive sectional titles. Mansfield Senior is one of the few teams in the state with over 1,500 wins in school history. Mansfield can still get a share of the Ohio Cardinal Conference title. The Tygers own fourteen straight sectional championships so something has to give when SJ and Mansfield meet. A

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great bottom half of the bracket at Lakota. #6 Sylvania Northview leads the NLL and #4 Toledo St. Francis is one of the most improved teams in NW Ohio. Look out for the Knights next season. #5 Findlay is always a tough out while #7 Springfield remains in contention in the NLL and has wins over Northview (two), St. Francis, and Findlay. Aerin West recently became the career-scoring leader at Northview.

Semifinals – Toledo St. John's over Clay; Mansfield Senior over Toledo Waite; Springfield over Toledo St. Francis; Findlay over Sylvania Northview

Finals – Toledo St. John's over Mansfield Senior; Springfield over Findlay

## DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: Last year's district champions were you guessed it, Lima Senior and Toledo St. John's. St. John's won their 2015 district title by beating a previously undefeated team (Sylvania Southview). Will history repeat itself?

Semifinals – Lima Senior over Toledo Whitmer; Toledo St. John's over Springfield

Final – Lima Senior over Toledo St. John's

## DIVISION II

The previous two D2 state champions came from NW Ohio with Norwalk winning in 2014 and Defiance prevailing in 2015. Few would have predicted either as a state champion heading into the tournament those years. For 2016, it does not appear there are any great teams in D2. The Swami probably made the same statement in 2014 and 2015. There are a number of very good D2 teams around NW Ohio.

Bowling Green, Toledo Central Catholic, and Mansfield Madison have dropped down from D1 while Huron, Ottawa-Glandorf, and Van Wert have moved up to D2. Vermilion is back as a Northwest Ohio school after a number of years playing in the Northeast District. Lake replaces Sylvania Southview, Ashland replaces Mansfield Madison, and Paulding replaces Riverdale as sectional sites. The district venues are all new with BGSU replacing Toledo Central Catholic, Galion replacing Mansfield Senior, and Ohio Northern replacing Liberty-Benton.

The BGSU district features state-ranked Napoleon, Toledo Rogers, Toledo Scott, Wauseon, and Toledo Central Catholic. On paper, the Galion district should be a dogfight with state-ranked Lexington, Ontario, and Sandusky at the top. Nine of

the twelve teams in the Galion district were at .500 or better at the time of the draw. Defiance and Ottawa-Glandorf appear to be the top contenders in the ONU district that also includes undefeated Upper Sandusky. Defiance and O-G are the top two teams in the Western Buckeye League this season. From top to bottom, the WBL does not appear to be quite as strong as in past seasons (two regional teams in D2 along with a regional team in D3 each of the past two seasons). However, do not be surprised if there are a few “upsets” along the way involving WBL schools.

The D2 regional tournament returns to BG’s Stroh Center. The BGSU district winner will play the North Ridgeville district winner (Bay Village, Keystone, Rocky River, Parma Heights Holy Name) in one semifinal while the Galion and Ohio Northern district winners will meet in the other regional semifinal.

### SECTIONALS

**ANTHONY WAYNE:** #1 Napoleon and #4 Toledo Central Catholic are the top seeds at AW. Napoleon started the season 9-0 including wins over Defiance and Wauseon. The Wildcats are chasing Sylvania Northview in the NLL race. Napoleon has not won a sectional title since 2009. The Swami is surprised that Central Catholic received a better seed than Scott. Central Catholic will likely finish the regular season under .500. The Irish have played a difficult schedule and split with Whitmer, lost to St. John’s at the wire, and hung with Lima Senior in the game at Central. Scott will finish their Toledo City League schedule in a tie for first place with Rogers. Scott is the top seed for the TCL final four playoff scheduled for the final week of the regular season that determines the league champion. The Bulldogs have played a strong non-league schedule. Bowling Green’s only wins to date are against Springfield and Liberty-Benton. Scott and BG might be a bit closer than expected.

Semifinals – Toledo Scott over Bowling Green; Tiffin Columbian over Fostoria

Finals – Toledo Scott over Toledo Central Catholic; Napoleon over Tiffin Columbian

**LAKE:** #2 Toledo Rogers and #3 Wauseon are the top seeds at Lake. Rogers is another very talented City League team. The Rams were cruising with only one loss to a team from Ohio until their three game losing streak to start February. They are the wild card in the BG district. Rogers will have a warmup against Oak harbor before playing Rossford in the finals. Rogers edged the Bulldogs in a December non-league game at Rossford. Rossford is currently tied with Elmwood for the NBC lead but have yet to win a non-league game. Wauseon is chasing Archbold in the NWOAL. The Indians should finish the regular season at 19-3 with a ten game winning streak. Woodward will be the fourth team in the City League final four. Maumee has had their troubles in the NLL, but the



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Woodward/Maumee matchup should make for a good semifinal.

Semifinals – Toledo Rogers over Oak Harbor; Toledo Woodward over Maumee

Finals – Toledo Rogers over Rossford; Wauseon over Toledo Woodward

**ASHLAND:** #1 Lexington and #4 Sandusky Perkins are the top seeds at Ashland High School. Lexington started the season 11 -0 before a loss at Wooster. The Minutemen currently have a slim lead over Mansfield Senior and Wooster in the Ohio Cardinal Conference. Perkins has played the majority of their season without their top two players. Both players recently returned, but Perkins still has some injury issues. The Pirates still have a shot at getting a share of the SBC championship. Madison is one of the sleepers in the Galion district. The Rams have the talent to do some damage but consistency has been an issue. Norwalk started the season 6-1, but it has been a struggle since late December. Port Clinton took the bye into the finals when Lex opted to play a semifinal game.

Semifinals – Mansfield Madison over Norwalk; Lexington over Clyde

Finals – Mansfield Madison over Perkins; Lexington over Port Clinton

**WILLARD:** #2 Ontario and #3 Sandusky are the top seeds at the Bob Haas Gymnasium. Ontario, the NOL leader, is currently on a ten game winning streak with a good chance of finishing the regular season with twelve straight wins. The Warriors started the streak after losing their top big man, Andrew Rathburn to injury. Rathburn will be back for the tournament. Joe Balogh reached 500 career wins back in mid-December. Sandusky is chasing Ontario in the NOL. The Blue Streaks return four starters from their 2015 district championship team. Sandusky’s Jayrese Williams scored a school record 54 points back in December against Toledo Bowsher. Vermilion joins the Sandusky Bay Conference next season. Shelby is the wildcard at Willard with five losses of four points or less. Assuming Shelby can get by Bellevue, the Whippets sectional final with Sandusky should be a good one. Huron doesn’t have a winning streak or losing streak longer than two games.

Semifinals – Vermilion over Huron; Shelby over Bellevue

Finals – Ontario over Vermilion; Sandusky over Shelby

**LIMA SENIOR:** #2 Upper Sandusky and #3 Ottawa-Glandorf

are top seeds at Lima. Undefeated Upper Sandusky is the Northern 10 champion. The Rams have three wins against D2 opponents with the rest of the schedule consisting of D3 and D4 teams. Upper has had a couple of scares against D4 opponents. Ottawa-Glandorf currently trails Defiance by a game in the WBL race. O-G's losses have been to Defiance, Lima Senior, Lima Central Catholic, Napoleon, and Findlay. Celina returns one starter from their 2015 WBL championship team that lost to Defiance in a regional semifinal. Celina started the season slow but have picked up steam as the season progresses. Wapakoneta started strong, faded a bit, and is now trying to pick up momentum headed into the tournament. Bryan also started slowly but has been playing better since the beginning of 2016. Van Wert is in the midst of a tough year, but handily defeated Bryan in mid-January.

Semifinals – Wapakoneta over Celina; Van Wert over Bryan

Finals – Wapakoneta over Upper Sandusky; Ottawa-Glandorf over Van Wert

PAULDING: #1 Defiance and #4 Lima Shawnee are top seeds at Paulding. Defiance returns three starters from last year's state championship team. The Bulldogs appear to be following a script similar to a year ago when the team seemed to gel after temporarily losing one of the Singleton brothers to a mid-season injury. We'll see if the script will again take them to Columbus. St. Marys was the district runner-up in 2015. The bottom of the bracket could get interesting. Shawnee, Lima Bath, and Elida along with Celina are in a battle for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the WBL. Shawnee is having a solid season but high-scoring Jaden O'Neal is currently out with an injury. His availability will impact the Indians' tournament chances. Bath has been very competitive with Andrew Renner, a starter on the Wildcats 2014 regional finalist, leading the way.

Semifinals – St. Marys Memorial over Kenton; Lima Bath over Elida

Finals – Defiance over St. Marys Memorial; Lima Shawnee over Lima Bath

#### DISTRICTS

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: BG last hosted a D2 district in 2013.

Semifinals – Toledo Scott over Napoleon; Wauseon over Toledo Rogers

Finals – Wauseon over Toledo Scott

GALION: Sandusky is the defending district champion.

Semifinals – Lexington over Mansfield Madison; Ontario over Sandusky

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Finals – Ontario over Lexington

OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY: Defiance and Celina both won district titles in 2015.

Semifinals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Wapakoneta; Defiance over Lima Shawnee

Finals – Defiance over Ottawa-Glandorf

#### DIVISION III

Top-ranked Lima Central Catholic lost in the D3 state championship game in 2015 to Cleveland VASJ after taking the 2014 state championship with a win over VASJ. The T-Birds have to be viewed as the favorite to take home another state crown in March. While LCC is clearly the top D3 team in NW Ohio, that should not take away from what should shape up to be a very interesting tournament season.

There is plenty of movement in D3 for 2016. Clear Fork, Galion, Genoa, Lake, and Otsego drop down from D2 while a large group (Seneca East, Ottawa Hills, Cardinal Stritch, Gibsonburg, Patrick Henry, Spencerville, Wayne Trace, Marion Local) moves up from D4. As mentioned previously, Ottawa-Glandorf (with 5 straight district titles in D3) is one of three schools moving to D2. St. Henry, a district runner-up to LCC in 2015, is among five schools dropping down to D4.

With the increase in D3 schools, there is an additional district and four regional spots for Northwest Ohio. The creation of the additional district this season means some new and different sectional sites (Toledo Bowsher, Monroeville, Elida, Van Wert). The four district tournaments will be held at new sites (Norwalk, Toledo Central Catholic, Napoleon, Lima Senior).

The Lima Senior district looks extremely strong. At the time of the draw, nine of the eleven teams in that district were at .500 or above. The "elephant in the room" at Lima is LCC. The Lima Senior district aside, the creation of an additional district in D3 has watered things down a bit in the other districts. Although Edison is state ranked, the Norwalk district doesn't jump out at you. Swanton and Ottawa Hills are the top teams in the Toledo Central Catholic district. There appears to be a great deal of parity in the Napoleon district. No team really stands out and there are probably nine teams with a shot at getting to the district. This should make for some very interesting games at both the sectional and district levels.

The four district winners will advance to the regional tournament at BGSU. The Norwalk district winner will meet

the Lima Senior district winner and the Toledo Central Catholic district winner will play the Napoleon district winner in the semifinal games. We do know that Northwest Ohio will have a D3 team in the 2016 state tournament.

## SECTIONALS

**MONROEVILLE:** #1 Milan Edison and #4 New London are top seeds in the new gym (opened in January) at Monroeville. A veteran Edison team has clinched at least a share of the SBC championship. Edison has already broken the school record for wins in a season, but there are questions about the strength of the SBC along with the Chargers' non-conference schedule. Edison losses are to Perkins and Sandusky St. Mary. New London has been a contender in the FC and should finish no worse than second behind South Central. It is difficult to believe for us old-timers, but Willard will likely finish at the bottom of the NOL. Long gone are the days of Bob Haas, the elephant, Nick Dials, and any mention of the "R word" when it comes to Willard basketball.

Semifinal – Willard over Seneca East

Finals – Willard over New London; Edison over Bucyrus

**SHELBY:** #2 Galion and #3 Western Reserve are the top seeds at Shelby. Galion finished the season under .500 in the MOAC Red Division. The Tigers only play seven games against teams from NW Ohio. Western Reserve has been a contender in the FC and is currently tied with New London for second. Western has some good young talent including standout freshman Jaret Griffith while Margaretta relies heavily on sophomores and a freshman. Ashland Crestview should finish in the upper half of the FC. Crestview and Western Reserve split close regular season games. Clear Fork has taken their lumps in the OCC this season. Look for Clear Fork to be part of a new league.

Semifinal – Margaretta over Clear Fork

Finals – Galion over Margaretta; Western Reserve over Ashland Crestview

**TOLEDO BOWSHER:** #1 Swanton and #4 Gibsonburg are top seeds at E. L. Bowsher. Swanton had high expectations heading into the season but dropped their first two NWOAL games to Wauseon and Archbold. The Bulldogs enter the final week of the regular season on an eleven game winning streak. Swanton's last loss was to Southview in late December. Gibsonburg graduated a talented senior class following last year's undefeated regular season. The Golden Bears started the season at 0-4. Genoa starts two freshmen and the Comets have been inconsistent. The Comets should finish the regular season over .500. Cardinal Stritch also had major graduation losses from last year's D4 district championship team. The Cardinals, another team receiving contributions from freshmen, started the season with an 8-1 record before reality set in.

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Semifinal – Cardinal Stritch over Woodmore

Finals – Swanton over Cardinal Stritch; Genoa over Gibsonburg

**OAK HARBOR:** #2 Ottawa Hills and #3 Eastwood are top seeds at Oak Harbor. Ottawa Hills will finish no worse than tied for the TAAC championship. Swanton recently snapped the Green Bears' fourteen game winning streak. Injuries have been an issue for OH this season. The availability of their top player, junior Hunter Sieben, will be a factor in any tournament success for the Bears. Eastwood is a defending district champion and appears to be peaking as tournament time approaches. Otsego will finish in the top half of the NBC. Evergreen's Jerry Keifer reached 300 career wins in January. Two returning starters and a top sub from Lake's 2015 D2 district semifinalist team are not playing for the Flyers this season. Northwood's last win against an OHSAA member school came in February 2013.

Semifinals – Lake over Northwood; Otsego over Evergreen

Finals – Ottawa Hills over Lake; Eastwood over Otsego

**DEFIANCE:** #1 Liberty-Benton is the top seed at Defiance. Liberty-Benton should finish in a tie for another BVC championship. L-B has shown some inconsistency and is not quite as balanced (two players accounting for 40 points per game) as in the past. Those two big scorers also make them a dangerous tournament team. Paulding and Tinora also have been inconsistent. Paulding will finish in the lower half of a very strong Northwest Conference while Tinora will finish under .500 in the GMC. Logan Bailey of Tinora has put up some impressive rebounding numbers. Delta returns two starters from last year's district runner-up team. This season has been disappointing with the Panthers at the bottom of the NWOAL entering the last week of the regular season. Why Archbold chose to play in a semifinal at Wauseon rather than going directly to the sectional final at Defiance is quite the conundrum for the Swami.



Semifinal – Delta over Patrick Henry

Finals – Liberty-Benton over Delta; Paulding over Tinora

**WAUSEON:** #2 Van Buren, #3 Elmwood, and #4 Archbold are top seeds at Wauseon. The Van Buren boys were 12-1 and

state ranked in late January when some injury problems caught up with the Knights. A very experienced Elmwood team will likely finish as NBC co-champs sharing the title with Rossford. The Royals lost teammate Derek Sheldon in a tragic automobile accident in early October. Archbold jumped on Elmwood's side of the bracket rather than going directly to a sectional final at Defiance. The Blue Streaks have clinched at least a tie for the NWOAL championship. That makes seven straight championships or co-championships for Archbold. Montpelier and Fairview are much improved. Montpelier in their final season in the NWOAL before heading to the BBC will finish the regular season above .500. Fairview finished in a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the GMC under former Tinora coach Rob Mahnke. Liberty Center gave Archbold all they could handle in their game played at Archbold.

Semifinals – Montpelier over Fairview; Archbold over Liberty Center

Finals – Van Buren over Montpelier; Archbold over Elmwood

VAN WERT: #2 Spencerville and #4 Delphos Jefferson are top seeds at Van Wert. The finals will be played Saturday afternoon. This is a very good sectional with every team above .500 at the time of the draw. A veteran Spencerville group will finish no worse than a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the NWC. The Bearcats were a district runner-up in D4 in 2015. Delphos Jefferson's Trey Smith, an Air Force Academy commit, is closing in on 2,000 career points. Wayne Trace won the D4 regional championship in 2015 to go along with a district title in 2014. The Raiders return three starters from the 2015 team but have battled some injuries this season. Wayne Trace shares this year's GMC title with Ayersville. Marion Local has won back-to-back district titles in D4 defeating Spencerville in 2015. Allen East will finish the regular season with no worse than a .500 record. The Mustangs are one of nine NWC schools with double digit wins.

Semifinal – Wayne Trace over Allen East

Finals – Wayne Trace over Delphos Jefferson; Spencerville over Marion Local

ELIDA: #1 Lima Central Catholic and #3 Coldwater are the top seeds at the Elida Fieldhouse. LCC returns four starters from last year's D3 state runner-up. Dantez Walton and Tre Cobbs both have scored over 1,000 career points. The T-Birds have played a formidable schedule and have Spencerville and Defiance the final week of the season. Other than the buzzer beater with Lima Senior, the T-Birds' closest game was an eight-point win over Toledo St. John's. Coldwater got their usual late start due to football. The Cavaliers will finish no worse than a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the MAC. Coldwater's 6'9" Andy Brunet is averaging a double-double (points & rebounds). Bluffton is another formidable NWC team. The Pirates have some impressive

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wins and some close losses including a one-pointer to Ottawa-Glandorf.

Semifinals – Parkway over Riverdale; Bluffton over Carey

Finals – Lima Central Catholic over Parkway; Bluffton over Coldwater

### DISTRICTS

NORWALK:

Semifinals – Edison over Willard; Galion over Western Reserve

Finals – Galion over Edison

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC: Eastwood won the Ashland University district in 2015.

Semifinals – Swanton over Genoa; Eastwood over Ottawa Hills

Finals – Swanton over Eastwood

NAPOLEON:

Semifinals – Liberty-Benton over Paulding; Archbold over Van Buren

Finals – Archbold over Liberty-Benton

LIMA SENIOR: LCC won the district played at Ohio Northern last year. The T-Birds have won four straight district championships.

Semifinals – Spencerville over Wayne Trace; Lima Central Catholic over Bluffton

Finals – Lima Central Catholic over Spencerville

### DIVISION IV

Teams from Northwest Ohio are dominating this year's Associated Press D4 poll. Lincolnview is trying to go wire-to-wire at the top of the poll. Sandusky St. Mary Central Catholic, Ayersville, and Fayette have also been fixtures in the top ten. As we all know, the AP poll is what it is. There could very well be teams not getting recognition in the poll that advance deep into the tournament.

Colonel Crawford, Wynford, Hopewell-Loudon, Lakota, and St. Henry have dropped from D3 to D4 for 2016. Toledo

Emmanuel Christian is back in the tournament after a number of years (does anyone remember Lionel Armstead who went from Emmanuel to West Virginia back in the 90's?) of not being an OHSAA member. We previously mentioned a number of schools moving to D3 from D4. Several of those schools including Spencerville, 2015 state semifinalist Wayne Trace, and Ottawa Hills would very much have been included in the conversation for district titles and more if they had remained as D4 schools.

There are a number of new sectional sites for 2016 (Sandusky, Lexington, Swanton, Riverdale, Findlay, and Allen East). Napoleon replaces Van Wert and Liberty-Benton replaces Lakota as district venues.

Sandusky St. Mary and Mansfield St. Peter's are contending teams in the Willard district with South Central, Colonel Crawford, and Buckeye Central also having championship possibilities. Eight of the thirteen teams in that district were at .500 or above at the time of the draw. Ayersville and Fayette are the top contenders in the Napoleon district with Toledo Christian and Edgerton also in the hunt. Lincolnview and Convoy Crestview are the top teams in the Elida district. All of the PCL teams are also part of the Elida district. Leipsic has been hot while Kalida and Miller City have both pulled off upsets the past couple of weeks. The Liberty-Benton district is the weakest of the D4 districts. Teams from the MAC typically dominate the Wapakoneta district, but the MAC does not appear to be quite as strong this season. Could this be the season that a team from outside the MAC wins at Wapak?

The Napoleon district winner will play the Elida district winner in the first regional semifinal game at BGSU with the Liberty-Benton district winner playing the Willard district winner in the second semifinal game. The Wapakoneta district winner will travel south to play one of the Dayton district winners (New Madison Tri-Village) in the regional at Kettering Fairmont. The other two Dayton district winners (Jackson Center, Russia, South Charleston Southeastern) will meet in the other regional semifinal at Kettering.

## SECTIONALS

**SANDUSKY:** #1 Sandusky St. Mary, #3 Colonel Crawford, and #4 South Central are the top seeds at the Big House (which isn't all that big). Sandusky St. Mary is the SRL champion. Will the Panthers' recent back-to-back losses to Old Fort and South Central be a wake-up call or serve as a sign of things to come over the next couple of weeks? Colonel Crawford will finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in the marathon known as the N10. The Eagles recently put a major scare in undefeated Upper Sandusky before some end-of-the-game chaos gave the Rams the win. South Central is the Firelands Conference champion. The Trojans had not won the FC since 2001. South Central split the regular season games with Plymouth. The Big Red were competitive in

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the FC but failed to win a game outside the conference.

Semifinals – Sandusky St. Mary over Crestline; South Central over Plymouth

Finals – Sandusky St. Mary over Lucas; South Central over Colonel Crawford

**LEXINGTON:** #2 Mansfield St. Peter's is the top seed at Lex. St. Peter's should finish as the Mid-Buckeye champ. The Spartans lost on a buzzer beater to D2 Ontario the first weekend of the season. St. Peter's is 8-0 against teams in the Willard district. Buckeye Central should finish just behind Upper Sandusky in the nine-team Northern 10. The Bucks appear to be playing their best basketball of the season as the tournament rolls around. Mansfield Christian still has a chance at getting a share of the Mid-Buckeye crown. Wynford had been on a roll before recent back-to-back losses to Upper and BC. Danbury from the TAAC is having their best season since 2010. The Swami is trying to figure why South Central opted to play at Sandusky rather than going to Lex.

Semifinals – Mansfield St. Peter's over Monroeville; Buckeye Central over Norwalk St. Paul; Wynford over Mansfield Christian

Finals – Mansfield St. Peter's over Danbury; Buckeye Central over Wynford

**SWANTON:** #2 Fayette, #3 Toledo Christian, and #4 Edgerton are top seeds at Swanton. Fayette is the BBC champion. The Eagles' only loss was to Liberty Center in overtime. Fayette is giving up just under 31 points per game. Toledo Christian can still get a share of the TAAC title with Ottawa Hills. TC has won 13 straight sectional titles. The TC Eagles are undefeated against D4 opponents. In an interesting move, Edgerton jumped on Toledo Christian's side of the bracket rather than opting to go to Bryan. The Bulldogs are 9-2 since early January and finished in a 3<sup>rd</sup> place tie in the GMC. Pettisville is having a down year but will finish in the upper half of a weak BBC.

Semifinals – Pettisville over Edon; Edgerton over Emmanuel Christian

Finals – Fayette over Pettisville; Toledo Christian over Edgerton

**BRYAN:** #1 Ayersville is the top seed at Bryan. Ayersville shares the GMC title with Wayne Trace. The title is only the Pilots' second since 1972. Ayersville is 5 points away from being undefeated with close losses to Antwerp and Kalida. Hilltop is the BBC runner-up. Hicksville started the season 7-0

before the injury bug hit. Garrett Crall of the Aces set the school's individual game scoring record against Stryker in mid-December before going down with an injury. Crall was sidelined for a number of games, and just recently returned to action. Holgate has been competitive and will be a factor in the bottom bracket along with Hilltop and Hicksville.

Semifinals – Maumee Valley Country Day over Stryker; Holgate over Hilltop; Hicksville over North Central

Finals – Ayersville over Maumee Valley Country Day; Hicksville over Holgate

VAN WERT: #1 Lincolnview and #4 Miller City are top seeds at Van Wert. Top ranked Lincolnview is the Northwest Conference champion. The Lancers' only loss was to Lima Central Catholic. Miller City will finish in a tie for second in the PCL. MC has some quality wins (Convoy Crestview, Lima Perry, Leipsic). Kalida is the PCL champion once again. These Wildcats also have some quality wins (Spencerville, Ayersville). Coach Richard Kortokrax is Ohio's all-time winningest coach. He has won many games. We have lost count at this point, but it is a big number. 2015 D4 regional runner-up Delphos St. John's is having an atypical season. The Blue Jays are on an eight game losing streak entering the final week of the season and are near the bottom of the MAC.

Semifinals – Pandora-Gilboa over Cory-Rawson; Kalida over Delphos St. John's

Finals – Lincolnview over Pandora-Gilboa; Kalida over Miller City

OTTAWA-GLANDORF: #2 Convoy Crestview and #3 Leipsic are top seeds at Robert Hermler. 2014 D4 state champion Crestview could finish as high as a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the very tough Northwest Conference. Senior Connor Lautzenheiser started on the state championship team. The Knights start two freshmen with others contributing. Leipsic should get a share of the BVC title with Liberty-Benton. The Vikings are on a ten game winning streak entering the final week of the season. Columbus Grove will finish near the bottom of the NWC but were in position to get a piece of the PCL title until a late season loss to Miller City. Antwerp's Sam Williamson set the school's individual game scoring record (48 points) in January against North Central. Continental has been competitive in the PCL.

Semifinals – Fort Jennings over Ottoville; Leipsic over Continental; Columbus Grove over Antwerp

Finals – Convoy Crestview over Fort Jennings; Leipsic over Columbus Grove

RIVERDALE: #2 McComb and #4 North Baltimore are top seeds at Riverdale. McComb started the season 8-1 with

## The Swami

the only loss to North Baltimore. The Panthers are a mid-pack BVC team. North Baltimore is having a solid season. The Tigers are also a mid-pack BVC team. North Baltimore's Chad Wright is averaging a double-double (points & rebounds) scoring over 20 points per game. Tiffin Calvert should finish the season over .500. The Senecas will be leaving the TAAC after this season to join the Sandusky Bay Conference River Division (soon to be the former Sandusky River League). Fremont St. Joseph and Fostoria St. Wendelin will also be part of the River.

Semifinals – Fremont St. Joseph over Fostoria St. Wendelin; Tiffin Calvert over Arcadia

Finals – McComb over Fremont St. Joseph; North Baltimore over Tiffin Calvert

FINDLAY: #1 New Riegel and #3 Arlington are the top seeds at FHS. New Riegel and Old Fort are in a battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the SRL. The pair will meet the final Friday night of the season at NR and will play again the following Friday in the sectional final. Old Fort is 7-1 since a loss to the Blue Jackets and recently upset Sandusky St. Mary. New Riegel was edged by undefeated Upper Sandusky back in early January. Arlington has a slim chance of getting a piece of the BVC title. The Red Devils are 8-1 since mid-January including a win over Liberty-Benton. There are two winless teams (Vanlue, Lakota) at Findlay. The odds of them meeting in this year's tournament are less likely than winning the powerball.

Semifinals – Old Fort over Vanlue; Arlington over Lakota; Hopewell-Loudon over Mohawk

Finals – New Riegel over Old Fort; Arlington over Hopewell-Loudon

ALLEN EAST: #1 Lima Perry and #3 Fort Recovery are top seeds at Allen East. Perry went undefeated to win the NWCC. The Commodores have four players averaging in double figures. After back-to-back losses to Shawnee and Wapakoneta in December, Perry went on a 10 game winning streak before a recent loss to Miller City. Fort Recovery is the only MAC team at Allen East. Fort Recovery started their basketball season just a week after winning the D7 state football championship. The Indians handed MAC champion Versailles their only conference loss. USV put together a solid season with their 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the NWCC. The Rams are 11-1 since the start of 2016. The semifinal between Lima Temple Christian and Ridgmont should be very competitive.

Semifinals – Lima Temple Christian over Ridgmont; Upper Scioto Valley over Waynesfield-Goshen



Finals – Lima Perry over Lima Temple Christian; Fort Recovery over Upper Scioto Valley

COLDWATER: #2 St. Henry and #4 Minster are top seeds at the Palace. St. Henry is battling Coldwater for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the MAC. The Redskins have been a little under the radar in quietly putting together a solid season. Minster should finish in the upper half of the MAC with wins over St. Henry, Coldwater, and Fort Recovery. Ada will finish near the bottom of the NWC but will end up with double digit wins. The Bulldogs head into the tournament after a near upset of top ranked Lincolnview. MAC schools New Knoxville and New Bremen are having disappointing seasons. Hardin Northern finished the season with eight wins. That is a good season in Dola regardless of the schedule.

Semifinals – New Knoxville over Hardin Northern; Ada over New Bremen

Finals – St. Henry over New Knoxville; Minster over Ada

#### DISTRICTS

WILLARD: Plymouth won the district last season.

Semifinals – Sandusky St. Mary over South Central; Mansfield St. Peter's over Buckeye Central

Finals – Mansfield St. Peter's over Sandusky St. Mary

NAPOLEON:

Semifinals – Toledo Christian over Fayette; Ayersville over Hicksville

Finals – Ayersville over Toledo Christian

ELIDA: Delphos St. John's won the district in 2015.

Semifinals – Lincolnview over Kalida; Convoy Crestview over Leipsic

Finals – Convoy Crestview over Lincolnview

LIBERTY-BENTON:

Semifinals – McComb over North Baltimore; Arlington over New Riegel

Finals – Arlington over McComb

WAPAKONETA:

Semifinals – Fort Recovery over Lima Perry; St. Henry over Minster

Finals – St. Henry over Fort Recovery

## The Swami

That is all for now. The Swami will return with a very abbreviated version for the regional and state tournaments (nobody reads that one anyway). All facts, fiction, and opinions are those of the Swami. Brackets are courtesy of daveyl.com and Mr. David Spengler. Hope to see you along the tournament trail. Rock on.