

# The Swami



Trail Trash, Issue #99-1, February, 1999

For the sixth consecutive year, Trail Trash is honored to employ the services of the Swami, Northwest Ohio's self-proclaimed expert on high school basketball. The Swami takes Trail Trash readers (those that can) places where no other publication would even dare. One of America's great newspapers made a futile attempt last year. Was it informative? Was it entertaining? Was it accurate? Hardly.

How does the Swami do it? His research is exhaustive. This not only included wearing out three sets of batteries on the remote flipping from Friday Frenzy to Big Board Friday to the Powers Pack, but also consisted of scouting trips, consulting with other experts, reviewing numerous publications, bribes, watching game tapes, and breaking out the ouija board. The Swami has been so focused on the task at hand that when informed of the results of the impeachment proceedings his response was "Damn it, I just hope people can drop this Watergate thing and let Nixon do the job he was elected to do."

Enough of the bull. It's Swami time.

## DIVISION I

1999 has been a big year in Division I. At one point, the top four teams in the state poll in Division I were from NW Ohio in Celina, Toledo Central Catholic, Toledo St. John's Jesuit, and Lima Senior. Central spent several weeks as the state's top-ranked club until being replaced by Celina. Many observers felt the Irish were overrated. In fact, the students at St. John's were instructed prior to their regular season victory over Central to refrain from using the "Overrated" chant. The Swami has not received confirmation whether the "Overrated" chant was replaced by "Hoosier Daddy." Although there is not a

great deal of depth coming out of Toledo, there are still several other good D1 clubs in NW Ohio with the likes of Sandusky, Mansfield Senior, Defiance, and Fremont Ross. This will be year two of a format change with the district semi-final games being played at the sectional sites. District final games are to be played at BG's ancient Anderson Arena. The two BG district winners move on to the UT regional to be joined by the Midview and Baldwin Wallace winners. Look for a NW Ohio team to make it to the state tournament in Division I after a two year absence.

## SECTIONALS

Willard: Mansfield Senior and Sandusky are seeded. Take Ashland and Fremont in first round games over Madison and Columbian respectively. The finals will be doozies. The Tygers, struggling of late, will edge the Ashland Arrows in the Friday opener. Sandusky and Ross is a big rivalry in addition to being a pick 'em game. Take Sandusky over the Little Giants by a coin flip.

Waite: St John's Jesuit and Northview are seeded. Don't expect St. John's to look past Woodward in the opener. The Titans edged Woodard back in December in a game which ended with the Polar Bear bench growling at veteran official George Thompson. Take the Johnnies. Look for Scott to overcome Waite's homecourt advantage in the other half of the bracket. Earl Morris has had a successful first year at Scott despite an inexperienced team in replacing the legendary Ben Williams. However, St. John's will be too strong for the Bulldogs in the final. In the other bracket at Waite, mild upsets rule in first round action with St. Francis stopping Northview and Clay dropping Southview. In the final, the Fran-

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nies move into the district with a win over the Clay Eagles.

Liberty-Benton: Celina and Lima Senior are seeded. This sectional features top ranked Celina and fifth ranked Lima Senior along with a strong Defiance club. Celina is extremely solid while Lima is explosive but a bit of a mystery given the primarily SW district schedule that the Spartans play. In the opener, Findlay has just a little more balance as the Trojans squeak by the Bowling Green twosome of Josh Almanson and Matt Taylor. In the other bracket look for Lima Senior to drub Perrysburg and for Defiance to beat Wapak. In one final, Celina defeats Findlay in convincing fashion. In the other final, Defiance provides a test for the Spartans but Lima pulls away late for a big win.

Libbey: Central Catholic and Libbey are seeded. Once again, we wonder why Libbey (and Waite) have the opportunity to play up to three tournament games on their home floor. Perhaps the NW District Board should either begin to look at truly neutral sites (Owens CC?) or take steps to ensure that Libbey plays at the Waite site and vice versa. The Swami's favorite coach, LeRoy Bates, has not had an opportunity to complain since his Cowboys lost to Whitmer in the '97 tourney opener. That was the game that LeRoy claimed the officials all had ties to Whitmer. Meanwhile, Central has been in a crash and burn mode recently after spending several weeks as the state's top-ranked team. Can Trail Trash's award winner for best-dressed coach of 1999, Mike Padgett, pull the Irish out of their tailspin which has seen defeats to St. John's, Celina, and Lima Central Catholic? In the openers look for Central to stop Start and Whitmer to defeat AW. In the other bracket, Rogers will nip Bowsher while Libbey will

squeeze by Springfield. The Cowboys better not look past the Devils. In the finals, Whitmer will shock rival Central right out of the tournament while Libbey will get by Rogers.

## DISTRICT

District semi-final games will be played at the sectional sites with both finals to be played at BG's beautiful Anderson Arena. In the semi-finals, Sandusky will avenge a regular season drubbing with a win over Mansfield while the Johnnies will defeat the hated Frannies again. Meanwhile, Libbey will edge Whitmer at Libbey. That leaves us with Celina versus Lima Senior at L-B. This will be one tough ticket and one great matchup. Chopper 11 may try to fly through the L-B gym at halftime. The Swami has been mullin' this one over for months. Look for Lima to nip the Bulldogs and advance to BG. In district final play at BG, St John's will defeat the Blue Streaks with Lima Senior drilling Libbey. St John's and Lima will have to wait until the regional final to face off.

## DIVISION II

Division II basketball in NW Ohio for 1999 has not produced a marquee team. Ottawa-Glandorf has been state-ranked throughout the year, but the Titans have suffered intriguing losses to Archbold and Paulding. Shelby started slowly but has been en fuego since late December although questions remain over the strength of the NOL. Elida, Shawnee, Oak Harbor, Perkins, and Norwalk have also been solid. Upsets could be the rule in D2 this year. The two NW Ohio district winners will be joined by winners from Lorain (Olmsted Falls?) and Columbus at the BG regional. Although far from a banner year,

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don't be surprised if a NW Ohio team makes the trip to Columbus in Division II after a two year absence.

## SECTIONALS

Lima Senior: Ottawa-Glandorf and Elida are seeded. Look for Shawnee to defeat Van Wert and Bath to stop St Marys Memorial in first round action. Ottawa-Glandorf has lacked an inside game for most of the season going in whatever direction the Tysons (Kerner and McGlaughlin) have taken them. Shawnee can pull off the upset, but look for O-G's veteran guards to lead them to the district. In the other final, Elida advances with a win over Bath

Sylvania Southview: Oak Harbor and Napoleon are seeded. Not one of the better sectionals with only one of the seven teams having a winning record at the time of the draw. In first round action, Oak Harbor edges Maumee in a low scoring contest. Don't write off the Panthers because they can pull off the upset. In the other bracket, Napoleon drills Otsego with Fostoria able to get by Rossford. In the finals, Oak Harbor has no trouble with Bryan while Fostoria upsets Napoleon in the nightcap. During the nightcap, the giant VanderSluis brothers from Oak Harbor wipe out the concession stand resulting in controversy with no food remaining for the Napoleon and Fostoria fans.

Sandusky: Perkins and Norwalk are seeded. Bellevue is normally the top dog at Sandusky, but they are down this year. Still, don't count the Redmen out. A month ago, the Swami would have told you that Vermilion would be the top team, but the Sailors have struggled of late playing their final year as independent before joining the Heartland Conference. In opening round action, look for Clyde to

defeat Port Clinton and Bellevue to upset Vermilion. The finals provide for interesting matchups (stole that from the guy on 96.1 FM on Friday mornings). Perkins and Clyde split this year while Norwalk swept the regular season series from Bellevue for the first time in years. Look for the seeds to prevail with Perkins and Norwalk getting close wins.

Mansfield Madison: Shelby and Willard are seeded. Much was expected of Shelby after a strong '98 campaign ended with an early tournament exit. The Whippets started slowly but have really been on a roll since late December. Willard with a new coach in Greg Nossaman has been a major surprise. The tradition-rich Flashes have been mediocre at best since their 1993 district final loss. Both Galion and traditional Swami favorite Lexington have been disappointing. In first round action, look for Bucyrus to drop Clear Fork and Lex to stop Galion. In the finals, Shelby prevails over Bucyrus while Lexington behind the efforts of Adam Howell edges Willard.

## DISTRICT

BGSU: Ottawa-Glandorf will make quick work of Fostoria in the opener. In the nightcap, Oak Harbor will look to avenge their 1998 district drubbing at the hands of the Bulldogs. Elida needs to get ahead early of the Rockets. If Oak Harbor can get a lead, they can wear down the Bulldogs with their patience and physical play. Take Elida, but it will be far from easy. Take the giant VanderSluis brothers from Oak Harbor if a tag team wrestling match breaks out with the Elida fans. In the final, the Tysons get some support from their teammates as the Titans nip Elida.

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Ashland University: Sandusky Perkins and Lexington should be a good matchup despite the disparity in records. Look for the Pirates and Coach T.J. James to beat Lex and move into their first district final. In the other semi-final, Shelby defeats NOL rival Norwalk for their third victory of the season over the Truckers. In the final, Shelby captures their first district title since.....Larry Siegfried? as the Whippets top Sandusky Perkins.

## DIVISION III

Division III basketball in NW Ohio for 1999 has been similar to Division II with an absence of marquee teams. Liberty-Benton has managed some how to stay in the top ten statewide despite some ugly losses while Patrick Henry was a top ten team for several weeks until reality set in. Several other teams have gaudy records including Evergreen, Lake, and Ashland Crestview, but questions remain whether these teams have what it takes to make an impact statewide. In the Swami's opinion, Wayne Trace is the top Division III team in NW Ohio. Look for a number of upsets in D3 play. The three NW Ohio district winners will be joined by the winner from a relatively weak Elyria district at the UT regional as NW Ohio attempts to return to the state tournament after a one year absence.

## SECTIONALS

Elida: Bluffton and Coldwater are seeded. An excellent sectional with all six teams having winning records at the time of the draw. Look for Kenton to defeat Columbus Grove and Lima Central Catholic to defeat Allen East in first round games. In the finals, Bluffton will defeat Kenton for a sectional title. The other final between LCC and Coldwater is al-

most too close to call. Look for the T-Birds to make another trip to the district with a close win over the Coldwater Cavaliers.

Defiance: Wayne Trace and Paulding are seeded. Another excellent sectional once again including the brothers Krauss (Archbold and Patrick Henry). Both Paulding and Archbold have wins over Ottawa-Glandorf while PH lost to the Titans in overtime. In first round action take Archbold over Tinora and PH over the Fairview Apaches. Both finals are top rate. Archbold has been strong at home but has struggled on the road. Look for Coach Al Welch and his Raiders to grab their second victory of the season over Archbold in one final. In the other final, PH has tradition while Paulding has come from nowhere this season. Another game too close to call but look for the Pats to utilize their tournament experience in defeating Paulding.

Sylvania Northview: Evergreen and Wauseon are seeded. Five NWOAL teams comprise this sectional at the Silica Drive gymnasium. It is difficult to call a 14-2 team (at the time of the draw) underachieving, but Evergreen could easily be a sub-.500 team after a number of close wins against a schedule predominated by Division IV BBC and TAAC teams. The Vikes may have gotten a wakeup call in a recent loss to Liberty. Look for LC to drop Swanton in the opener. In the finals, Wauseon has too much for Liberty Center while Evergreen continues to survive against Delta.

Old Fort: Lake and Elmwood are seeded. Liberty-Benton did not get a seed despite being state ranked. It looks like the five SLL coaches ganged up against the Eagles despite L-B's thrashing of SLL power Woodmore back in December. Genoa had some un-

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reasonably high expectations back in November but overall have been a disappointment. The Comets are coming on a bit late in the season and will defeat Lakota. Meanwhile, L-B will edge Eastwood as the Eagles encounter difficulty in scoring. In one final, Elmwood outscores Genoa. Do not expect a defensive struggle in this one. The other final includes a terrific coaching matchup between Lake's Jim Robinson and L-B's Steve Williman. The over/under will be sixty points in this matchup as Lake nips L-B to continue a cinderella season for the Flyers.

Norwalk: Ashland Crestview and Huron are seeded. Only one team in this sectional has a winning record (Crestview). Huron has been a huge disappointment as the experienced Tigers do not appear to have recovered from the football playoffs. In first round action, look for Margareta to defeat Western Reserve and Milan Edison to stop New London. In the finals, Huron with big Jim Fisher leading the way holds off Margareta while Edison shocks Crestview for sectional titles.

Bucyrus: Wynford and Mohawk are seeded. Another sectional with just five teams. Wynford and Ontario are the traditional powers in this group. In the only semi-final game, Wynford stops Seneca East. In one final Wynford defeats the neighboring Upper Sandusky Rams. In the other matchup, Ontario has struggled most of the season while Mohawk has been on fire. Look for Ontario to use their tournament experience to edge streaking Mohawk.

## DISTRICT

Napoleon: One of two district tournaments to be played at the alleged Grand Canyon. Who ever came up with that name anyway? Why is it that so

many gyms need to have some cheesy name. Why does there need to be a Hangar, or a Purple Pit, or a Den, or an Igloo, or a Big House, or a Supreme Court, or a House of Heat, or a Thunder Dome? This is the same foursome that made it to last year's district. In one semi-final, Bluffton will avenge their '98 defeat at the hands of Patrick Henry. Look for Wayne Trace to defeat the LCC T-Birds in the other semi-final. In the final, Wayne Trace captures a second straight trip to the regional tournament with a close win over the Bluffton Pirates.

Toledo Waite: In one semi-final, Lake holds on to defeat Wauseon. In the second game at the Waite Fieldhouse, Elmwood edges Evergreen in a wide-open contest marking the end of Viking standout Brooks Miller's career. In the championship game, Lake's defense and strong inside game are enough to carry the Flyers past Elmwood.

Ashland University: Another district with the same foursome as in 1998. Maybe the Swami is spending too much time looking at last year's notes. The Swami likes Huron to hold off Ontario in the opener with Wynford defeating Edison in the nightcap. In the final, look for Wynford to advance to the regional with a win over Huron.

## DIVISION IV

As we have said in the past, Division IV basketball in NW Ohio has a strong tradition. Not only have their been powerhouse teams such as state champs Upper Scioto Valley ('94), Liberty-Benton ('95), and Lincolnview ('96) but also unbelievable fan support. 1999 has been very similar to last season without a team from NW Ohio taking on the role of prohibitive favorite for a state crown. The Fort's,

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Jennings and Recovery, have been top ten teams all season but there are other teams such as Edon, Tiffin Calvert, and Colonel Crawford that have built up outstanding records with little fanfare. D4 in NW Ohio for 1999 will be wide open. The Elida, Napoleon, Defiance, and Fostoria district champs advance to the UT regional with the Wapak winner heading to Dayton and the Galion winner going to the Columbus regional.

## SECTIONALS

Coldwater: Fort Recovery and Minster are seeded. A tough sectional with all six teams from the Midwest Athletic Conference. The winners at Coldwater can pass go and advance directly to the district final. In the openers, the Swami is going with Marion over Parkway and St. Henry over New Bremen. In the Friday tilts, state ranked Fort Recovery rocks Marion Local while Minster has just enough to nip St. Henry. After the game, St. Henry Principal Bob Condon is seen giving the choke sign to Coach Fran Guilbault.

Upper Scioto Valley: New Knoxville and Ridgemont are seeded. Does anyone remember when the most talented sportscaster in Toledo television history, the annoying but pretty Jeff Blanzzy, would interject "ARE YOU KIDDING ME!" into every story in his sportscast? The Swami has hit the lowest of his lows, but there is no better way than that memorable phrase immortalized by the broadcasting giant, Mr. Blanzzy, to sum up the six teams playing at USV. With a combined 20-76 record at the time of the draw, not a single team has a winning record. Ada over Riverdale and Ridgemont over Waynesfield-Goshen in first round games. In the finals, go with

New Knoxville over Ada and Hardin-Northern in an "upset" over Ridgemont.

Van Wert: Fort Jennings and Ottoville are seeded. Four solid teams play at VW including state-ranked Fort Jennings and '98 state runner-up Delphos St John's. Unfortunate that a couple of these teams weren't sent to USV. In the openers, take Convoy Crestview over Delphos Jeff and DSJ over '97 state champ Lincolnview. Both finals will be hotly contested but look for Fort Jennings to defeat Crestview and Delphos St John's to nip the Big Green of Ottoville.

Lima Bath: Lima Perry and Lima Temple Christian are seeded. This sectional has suffered the past couple of years but is a bit better in 1999 with quality clubs from Perry and LTC. The Swami likes the Arlington Red Devils over Cory-Rawson and Spencerville over USV in first round actions. In the finals, the seeds prevail with LTC topping Arlington and the boys from Cridersville defeating the Spencerville Bearcats.

Ottawa-Glandorf: Kalida and Pandora-Gilboa are seeded. Parody is the word. The Swami would also like to avoid using a metal detector the next time he wins the cake raffle at Continental. Let's go with Leipsic over McComb and Continental over Miller City in first round action. In the finals go with Kalida over Leipsic. In the nightcap, you need to consider Continental's wins against Archbold, Patrick Henry, and Delphos St. John's. Yes, those games were played at Continental, but that's still stout competition. The Swami stays on board the Pirate ship as CHS defeats Pandora-Gilboa.

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Springfield: Woodmore and Gibsonburg are seeded. Don Christie has done an excellent with a small but quick Woodmore squad while Gibsonburg has been a disappointment despite the presence of high-scoring transfer Jeremiah Deibler. In opening round action, Cardinal Stritch will stop lowly Northwood, Ottawa Hills will nip Toledo Christian in overtime, and Gibsonburg will score big against Maumee Valley Country Day. In the finals, Woodmore will stop Stritch while Gibsonburg barely gets by Ottawa Hills.

Bryan: Edon and Edgerton are seeded. Montpelier versus Antwerp, what a matchup. Locos win. Locos win. In the other semi-final, North Central better not be caught looking ahead to Edon. Hicksville is much improved, but NC will prevail. In one final take Edgerton big over Montpelier. In the nightcap, Edon and North Central is about as good as it gets for a sectional final. Take the Edon Bombers with Justin Best leading the way over NC.

Wauseon: Ayersville and Fayette are seeded. Stryker is young and improving while Holgate has struggled all season. Take Stryker in a close one. Pettisville has been a bit disappointing but take the Blackbirds over Hilltop. Fayette has faded late in the season, but the Eagles will hold off Stryker in one final. In the other final, traditional Swami favorite Ayersville edges Pettisville.

Findlay: Vanlue and Carey are seeded. An old coach told the Swami that it was a down year in Division IV in the Fostoria/Findlay area. You'll get no argument from the Swami. Take North Baltimore over Arcadia and Van Buren over Fostoria St. Wendelin in opening action. In the finals, Vanlue defeats North Baltimore and Van Buren stops Carey.

Hopewell-Loudon: Tiffin Calvert and Fremont St. Joseph are seeded. Both Calvert and St. Joe have quietly put together outstanding seasons. Only a loss to Lake Mars Calvert's record. In the openers, New Riegel defeats Bettsville while Old Fort survives against Buckeye Central. The championship games are no contest as Tiffin Calvert destroys New Riegel and Fremont St. Joseph routs Old Fort.

Port Clinton: South Central and Danbury are seeded. Five of the six teams in this sectional have a good chance of advancing. Norwalk St. Paul started slowly but has been coming on strong while Danbury has been picking up wins since finally finding a way to eke out the close ones. In the openers, take St. Paul over Monroeville and Hopewell-Loudon in a squeaker over Sandusky St. Marys. In the finals, let's go with St. Paul in a mild upset over South Central and Danbury close over H-L. Ask the Swami tomorrow, and you'll probably get different results.

Lexington: Colonel Crawford and Lucas are seeded. Colonel Crawford has quietly put together an outstanding season with just one loss. In the openers, take Mansfield St. Peter's over Mansfield Christian and the Plymouth Big Red over Crestline. The Swami likes Colonel Crawford over Mansfield St. Peter's and Lucas over Plymouth in the championship tilts.

## DISTRICT

Wapakoneta: After the earlier tirade, we don't need to get into much detail regarding the semi-final winners. Fort Recovery big over Hardin-Northern and Minster over New Knoxville. Fort Recovery only has a loss to Delphos St. John's to blemish their re-

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has a loss to Delphos St. John's to blemish their record and don't look for that to change as the Indians defeat Minster.

Elida: Fort Jennings and Lima Perry square off in the opener with the Musketeers already holding a regular season victory over the Commodores. Fort Jennings makes it a sweep to move into the district final. In the nightcap, Delphos St. John's is able to hold off Lima Temple Christian. The final is a repeat of the '98 championship game. Fort Jennings gains revenge over the Blue Jays to advance to the regional.

Napoleon: Kalida and Gibsonburg start things off at Napoleon with Kalida liking the Golden Bears' uptempo style. Take Kalida. In the nightcap, Woodmore's quickness is just a bit more than Continental's inside game as the Wildcats prevail. In the final, Woodmore advances to Toledo with a win over Kalida.

Defiance: A new venue after being played at Archbold in 1998. This district matches up league rivals in Edgerton and Ayersville from the Green Meadows Conference and Edon and Fayette from the Buckeye Border Conference. The Swami likes Edgerton over Ayersville and Edon over Fayette in semi-final games. It is hard to go against a team with a guy playing named Skeet Hug (also known as Hug Skeet in one of America's great newspapers), but the Swami will as Edgerton nips Edon.

Fostoria: The Midland Athletic Conference shows its muscle as Fremont St. Joe beats Vanlue and Tiffin Calvert throttles Van Buren in semi-final play. The Senecas and Crimson Streaks normally meet on the small floors at Calvert and St. Joe, but neither

team shows problems in adapting to the bigger floor at Fostoria as Tiffin Calvert stops St. Joseph to advance to Toledo.

Galion: Normally there is a moment of silence as we reach the Galion district as the Swami lapses into unconsciousness. We realize that few, if any, readers bother to read this far. In the semi-final games, take Lucas over Norwalk St. Paul and Colonel Crawford over Danbury. In the final, Colonel Crawford advances to the Columbus regional with a win over Lucas.

Please visit Trail Trash on our website whenever we get it set up, and join us at our first annual tailgate party, Swamipalooza, at BGSU on Saturday, March 13. More details to follow.