

Trail Trash

**for the 1999 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament**

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



Woeful. Pitiful. Awful. How else can you describe the Swami's performance in the first edition of Trail Trash for 1999? Averaging 108 wins per year entering this tournament season, the Swami slumped to a 98-50 win/loss record. Not only did the Swami have a cool 66% success rate, but he also picked a mere four district winners. The Swami's stats are beginning to look similar to the downward spiral in free throw percentages. We can only hope the Swami has a bit more success in this second edition of Trail Trash for 1999.

With his dobber down and an order of Viagra on the way, the Swami can not find anything really worth whining about. Instead, he is anxiously awaiting the arrival of the 1999 Boys State Basketball Tournament at the Value City Arena. It seems like it was only twelve months ago when Mike Carfagna from Cleveland St. Ignatius made the final state tournament shot taken at St John Arena. It will be interesting how fans react to the tournament at the spacious Schott.

Enough of the bull. It's Swami time.

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DIVISION I

Only four of the sixteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have reached regional play. Five teams make a return trip to the regional for 1999 (Cincinnati Withrow, East Liverpool, Cleveland St. Ignatius, East Cleveland Shaw, Shaker Heights), with Withrow and Ignatius remaining alive from the '98 final four. Defending state champ Lakewood St. Edward, in a rebuilding year, was eliminated by North Olmsted in their sectional opener.

REGIONAL

Columbus Fairgrounds: #5 East Liverpool heads this field. Unanimous choice for worst tournament site. The place is a dump with an awful shooter's background. Columbus teams always have an advantage since they play all their tournament games in this barn. Perhaps the OHSAA could move the girl's tournament to the Value City Arena and use St. John Arena for regional play or move the regional to a Value City parking lot. Anything would be an improvement. In the opener, take East Liverpool and big Forest Kirby over Hilliard Darby. Springfield South defeated #7 Cincinnati Oak Hills to get to the regional, but the Swami likes Grove City over South. In the final, the Greyhounds find the home cooking to their liking as they defeat Nick Alois's East Liverpool Potters.

University of Akron: #2 Shaker Heights heads this field. Back in December, fans were looking at this regional for a matchup between Shaker and Akron Buchtel. Buchtel lost top gun Derrick Tarver when Akron police smelled crack in his car on New Year's Day (although Buchtel Coach Harvey Sims tried to add him to the tournament eligibility list). The #9 Griffins lost their sectional opener so this regional instead features some positive stories. Akron Garfield was an also-ran in the Akron City Series but emerged from the upset riddled Copley district. Garfield won't have enough to defeat Rayen and Romeo Augustine. The Red Ball Express from East Cleveland Shaw has dedicated their season to David Parker. Parker, who would have been a senior this season, passed away during the early minutes of

Shaw's 1998 tournament opener. Shaker figured to be strong despite the loss of Tennessee recruit Jon Higgins to an ACL over the summer. Higgins returned to the Red Raiders in February making Shaker all the stronger. Shaker will be too much for Shaw. In the final, Shaker Heights will advance to its first state tournament with a win over Rayen.

University of Dayton: #10 Beaver Creek heads this field. This is probably the most balanced field among D1 regionals during a less than outstanding year in the Southwest. Moeller appears to have found their stride late in the season and look for Moe to edge Troy and Brooks Hall. Beaver Creek is 24-0 without a great deal of respect. Creek was able to edge into the top ten despite being the state's only undefeated D1 club during the regular season. The Swami predicts that Withrow will nip Beaver Creek. In the final, look for Moeller to earn their initial trip to the state tournament as the Crusaders slip by Withrow.

University of Toledo: #12 Toledo Central Catholic heads this field. Celina? Lima Senior? Toledo St John's? Two of those three were locks for this regional according to the Swami. Throw in #8 Midpark and you had quite a regional despite the disaster of a district from Midview. Toledo Central Catholic was thought to be overrated both as the state's top ranked club for several weeks and as the state's #12 team in the final poll. Central survived while Celina, Lima Senior, and St. John's are sitting at home. In the opener, Mansfield will stop Brunswick. Central advances to the regional after defeating #1 Celina in a district final while 1998 state runner-up Ignatius defeated #8 Midpark for their district crown. Central squeezes by Cleveland St Ignatius in the other semifinal. The Irish advance to Columbus as they hold off the Mansfield Senior Tygers for the regional crown.

STATE

The field will consist of Grove City, Shaker Heights, Cincinnati Moeller, and Toledo Central Catholic. Only Toledo Central Catholic has ever made it to the state tournament with their last trip coming in 1952. Once again, D1 will close out the tournament on Saturday night. In the semifinals, Shaker will defeat Grove City while Toledo Central Catholic edges past Moeller. In the championship game, the Red Raiders and Coach Bob Wonson take home their initial state crown with a win over Toledo Central Catholic.

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DIVISION II

Five of the nineteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have survived to reach regional play. Four teams make a return trip to regional play in 1999 (Cleveland Benedictine, Cincinnati McNicholas, Columbus Beechcroft, Philo) with defending state champ Benedictine being the only survivor from the 1998 state tournament field.

REGIONAL

Canton Civic Center: #6 Struthers and #9 Cleveland Benedictine head up this field. Triway defeated #1 Akron Hoban in a district semifinal. The opener is a dandy as both Struthers and Triway have put together impressive credentials in reaching the regional. Struthers has eliminated #10 Youngstown Chaney and #17 Youngstown Liberty while Triway has knocked off 19-4 Canton South in addition to the win over Hoban. Go with Struthers in a tight one. Benedictine played a strong schedule during the regular season and lost seven times, but have yet to be tested in the tournament. The Bengals win big over Copley. In the final, the Bengals get their initial challenge of the tournament, but advance to Columbus with a win over Struthers.

Ohio University: #5 Dresden Tri-Valley and #14 Portsmouth head up this field. Philo advanced to the '98 regional before losing to state runner-up Dover 36-35 while Washington Court House has advanced to this year's regional with a win over #14 McDermott Northwest. The opener is a pick 'em game. Look for Portsmouth to have too much quickness for Philo's Electrics. Tri-Valley will defeat Washington Court House in the nightcap. In the final, look for Tri-Valley to edge past Portsmouth for the trip to Columbus.

Wright State: #8 Cincinnati McNicholas heads this

group. This regional features the Cinderella team of the '99 tournament in Kings Mill Kings. Kings went through a roller coaster regular season finishing at 9-11. In tournament play Kings has been en fuego with wins over #2 Eaton, #3 Springboro, '98 state qualifier Hamilton Badin, and Urbana. In the opener look for McNicholas to defeat Whitehall. Whitehall defeated #12 Columbus Watterson in their district final. The Swami would love to see Kings continue its storybook season but thinks that Kettering Alter may be just a little too big. Recent history for both Alter and McNicholas at the state tournament has not been pretty. Take McNicholas over Alter for the regional championship.

Bowling Green State University: No state ranked teams in this group although Olmsted Falls is 23-2. Lima Shawnee's last district championship came more than thirty years ago while Shelby goes back even further. The Whippets started off 1-3 playing less than a stellar schedule, but have come back to win eighteen of their last nineteen. Shawnee defeated #7 Ottawa-Glandorf in a sectional final. The Indians will have too much quickness for Shelby. The Swami thinks that Olmsted Falls is still a year away despite their outstanding record. Beechcroft will have too much size for the Bulldogs. In the final, Lima Shawnee will edge Beechcroft riding the efforts of their 5'3" point guard, Jermaine Dawson.

STATE

The field will consist of Cleveland Benedictine, Dresden Tri-Valley, Cincinnati McNicholas, and Lima Shawnee. All four of these teams have prior state tournament history although Lima Shawnee's only trip came back in 1965. Plenty of empty seats for the Thursday evening action. The Swami just can not go against Benedictine. The Bengals defeat Tri-Valley in the D2 opener. The nightcap matches contrasting styles of play. Take McNich over Shawnee. In the championship game, Benedictine defeats McNicholas. The Bengals become the first team to win three consecutive championships since the late Columbus Wehrle from 1988 through 1990.

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DIVISION III

Six of the seventeen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll are still playing including #1 Bedford Chanel and #2 Cincinnati Madeira. Four teams (Bedford Chanel, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary's, Richmond Dale Southeastern, Grandview Heights) return to regional action for 1999. St. Vincent-St. Mary's was a Division II regional qualifier in 1998 while Southeastern and Grandview were Division IV qualifiers. Grandview Heights was also a state tournament qualifier in 1998. Defending D3 state champ Sparta Highland was eliminated by New Albany in a sectional final.

REGIONAL

University of Toledo: #16 Metamora Evergreen heads this field. The other three teams in this regional have a combined twenty-eight losses. Both Elyria Catholic and Coldwater can boast of playing in strong conferences. Chanel and several Cleveland area D1 And D2 teams play in EC's conference while Coldwater's conference included four district finalists. The Swami likes Coldwater over Elyria Catholic despite the efforts of OSU football recruit Matt Wilhelm. Evergreen advanced to the regional with a win over #9 Liberty-Benton while Huron had been a major disappointment until tournament play. Take the Vikings over the Huron Tigers. Coldwater will defeat Evergreen in the championship game despite the efforts of Vikings all-stater Brooks Miller.

Wright State: #2 Cincinnati Madeira and #5 Bloom-Carroll head this field. Madeira and Bloom-Carroll in the opener is too close on paper to call. Bloom-Carroll won their district final over Bishop Hartley by one point. Look for B-C to use that experience to nip Madeira. The Swami wasn't sure if Finneytown would have an

opponent in the other semifinal. There were conflicting accounts of whether Versailles or Milton-Union had won their district final. Take Finneytown over Milton-Union. In the championship game, Cincinnati Finneytown pulls the upset with a win over Bloom-Carroll.

Canton Fieldhouse: #1 Bedford Chanel and #12 Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary's head this field. Chanel had barely been tested all season until their 61-58 district final win over Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph. The Firebirds will defeat a good Newton Falls club in the opener. Louisville Aquinas at 12-12 has the worst record of any of the sixty-four teams playing in the regional. Aquinas defeated #6 North Lima South Range in a district semifinal. What can't you say about St. Vincent-St. Mary's? The Irish lost in the '98 D2 regional and then the fun really began. First, the Tarver twins transferred to Buchtel and Barberton. Soon after Derrick Tarver had his run in with the Akron police, he committed to Cincinnati. UC's Bob Huggins then announced that he was not recruiting Derrick Tarver. DT then announced that someone impersonating Bob Huggins had been calling his house and offering him scholarships. Getting back to St.V-St.M, the Irish hired the original Father Flanagan, Keith Dambrodt, as their coach. With him, Dambrodt brought his path of havoc that had gone from Ashland University to Central Michigan. In typical Dambrodtian fashion two very tall Lithuanian players than enrolled at the Akron school. Both of the Lithuanian players were declared ineligible and things have remained relatively calm at the Akron school. Take St. Vincent-St. Mary's over Aquinas. In the final, Chanel will nip the Irish behind the play of Bam Childress and Brian Swift.

Ohio University: #14 Fort Frye heads this group. Time to get out the map to find some of these. Fort Frye had a quality win over Garaway, a pre-season pick for the D3 state championship, in their district final. Fort Frye will defeat the boys from Sardinia Eastern Brown in the opener. Southeastern defeated #11 Belpre in a district semifinal. Southeastern, with

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6'10" Kevin Netter leading the way, will defeat Grandview heights in the other semi. Southeastern will advance to Columbus with a win in the championship game over Fort Frye.

STATE

The field will consist of Coldwater, Cincinnati Finneytown, Bedford Chanel, and Richmond Dale Southeastern. Coldwater, Chanel, and Southeastern have a combined record of 0-8 at the state tournament with Southeastern's 0-5 leading the way. This is Finneytown's first trip. Coldwater and Finneytown open the Seventy-Seventh Boys State Basketball Tournament with the Cavaliers defeating the team from Cincinnati. Chanel defeats Southeastern in the other semifinal. In the Saturday morning game, Chanel defeats Coldwater for the state championship in D3.

DIVISION IV

Six of the sixteen teams ranked in the final

Associated Press poll have reached regional play. Only two teams (Berlin Hiland and Cincinnati Seven Hills) make a return trip to the regional in 1999 with only Hiland having a chance to make a second consecutive trip to the state tournament. The state's top ranked team, Sebring McKinley was defeated by McDonald in a district semifinal.

REGIONAL

Columbus Fairgrounds: #8 Worthington Christian and #11 Cardington Lincoln head the field. Worthington Christian along with Zanesville Rosecrans were pre-season favorites for the D4 state crown. In the opener, Worthington Christian has too many weapons for Lucas. Waterford advanced to the regional with a win over #15 Peebles in the district final. Cardington stops Waterford in the other semifinal. In the championship game, the junior duo of Sam Smith and Jason Weakley lead Worthington past Cardington.

University of Toledo: #4 Fort Jennings heads up this field. Both Edgerton and Pandora-Gilboa had their largest tournament margin of victory in their district finals. Look for Edgerton to nip P-G in the opener. Fremont St. Joe was really stumbling at the end of the regular season but has gotten a second wind in the tournament. Fort Jennings has been strong all season with only a loss to Ottoville marring their record. Fort Jennings gained revenge for their '98 district final loss to state runner-up Delphos St. John's with a district final win over the Blue Jays. The Musketeers will defeat Fremont St Joe in a semifinal. Fort Jennings will garner their initial trip to the state tournament with a win over Edgerton in the championship game.

Canton Fieldhouse: #3 Berlin Hiland and #15 Canton Heritage Christian head this field. Kidron Central Christian defeated #9 Dalton and Kirtland defeated #7 Bristol in their district finals. The Swami likes Kidron over Kirtland in the opener. Berlin Hiland defeated #2 Zanesville Rosecrans 97-92 in a scintillating district final. The Hawks will capitalize on that momentum to down an up and coming Canton Heritage Christian team. Hiland makes a return trip to the state tournament as the result of an easy victory over Kidron Central Christian in the championship tilt.

University of Dayton: #5 Fort Recovery heads this field. Cincinnati Seven Hills was the best D4 club in far Southwestern Ohio while Houston and Botkins have jumped up to bite Shelby County League rivals Russia and Fort Loramie in the tournament. Fort Recovery was very consistent in the strong Midwestern Athletic Conference with only a loss to Delphos St. John's marring their record. Fort Recovery will defeat Seven Hills in the opener with Houston nipping Botkins in overtime in the other semifinal. In the championship game, Fort Recovery makes their first trip to Columbus since their 1971 Class "A" championship with a win over Houston.

STATE

An outstanding field consisting of Worthington Christian, Fort Jennings, Berlin Hiland, and Fort Recovery. Worthington Christian was the 1994 runner-up while Hiland won the 1992 state championship. Fort Jennings holds on for the win against Worthington in the Friday morning contest. Fort Recovery defeats Berlin Hiland in the Friday afternoon contest. In the championship game, the Fort Recovery Indians triumph over the Fort Jennings Musketeers for the D4 title.

Trail Trash thanks you for your continued support and interest. See you in Columbus.

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