

# *Trail Trash*

for the 2000 OHSAA Boys High School  
Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

*Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...*

# The Swami



The Swami appears to be making a comeback after finishing up with a win/loss record of 106-41 (72%) and eight district winners in the first edition of Trail Trash for 2000. That is not quite up to some of the gaudy numbers posted by the Swami in the mid-nineties but is a definite improvement over the Swami's 1999 debacle.

The Swami remains semi-coherent after watching twenty-three tournament games over the past twelve days. Before moving on to regional and state, let's quickly recap sectional and district play. The best day of the tournament was Saturday, March 11 featuring the three Division I district final games played at Toledo. The Lima Senior-Mansfield Senior matchup was fantastic while Libbey-St. John's

Jesuit was also outstanding. The Scott-St. Francis game may not have been quite as draining, but it was also close and intense.

The oddest occurrence was seeing the head coach of a Division I sectional championship team officiate a Division II sectional contest the following evening. Only in Cleveland could that happen.

The Swami would like to thank all those who have been complimentary of Trail Trash. The publisher may do this for fun, but the Swami does it for the money. Hopefully, there is a really big check in the mail.

Enough of the bull. Let's get it on. It's Swami time.

**DIVISION I**

# The Swami

Seven of the fifteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have reached regional play. Only three teams (Cleveland St. Ignatius, Mansfield Senior, Beavercreek) are making a return trip to the regional in 2000 with Mansfield the only team remaining from the '99 final four. Defending big school champ Cincinnati Moeller was eliminated by Cincinnati Western Hills in their sectional opener. D1 features one undefeated team in top-ranked Toledo Libbey.

## REGIONAL

University of Akron: Overrated #9 Cleveland South is the only ranked team at the JAR. Very balanced field with South probably the weakest team. Flyers played sectional and district games on their home floor. With no more officiating on his schedule, South Coach Miguel Curl can now focus on his team. St. Ignatius had an easy time in a weak Baldwin-Wallace district and should continue with a win over South. Central-Hower had two of their starters, Brandon Greene and Thaddeus Daggett, leave the team early in the season to attend prep school. They returned in January and now the Eagles are in their first regional since '88 after defeating #6 Buchtel in a district final. Bedford had good district wins over Mentor and Shaw. Take Central-Hower over Bedford in a squeaker. In the final, look for Ignatius to nip Central-Hower for the regional crown.

University of Toledo: #1 Toledo Libbey and #4 Mansfield Senior head this field. Mansfield twice went double overtime in district wins over Fremont Ross and #7 Lima Senior. The Tygers shouldn't have quite as much trouble with Medina although the Battling Bees have an outstanding player in Tony Stockman. Medina's tournament wins have been by a total of nine points. Top ranked and undefeated Libbey opens with archrival Scott. The Cowboys defeated the 'Dogs twice during the regular season with Libbey somehow managing to come up with an overtime win in their second encounter. Scott defeated #8 Toledo St. Francis in a district final. Look for Libbey to make it three in a row. Mansfield and Libbey met in December with the Cowboys winning by twenty-one. Mansfield will avenge their lone loss of the season with a narrow win over Libbey and return to the state tournament.

Columbus Fairgrounds: #10 Canton McKinley and #13 Logan head this field. Every year we mention what a dump this place is. Being part of the Eastern/Southeastern District craziness, Logan has only played two tournament games. One of those was their district final win over #15 East Liverpool. Hilliard Davidson has a district win over #14 Thomas Worthington. Take Davidson over Logan. McKinley smoked #12 Massillon Jackson in the district final by a 63-38 count. The Swami likes the Pups over a young Brookhaven team led by Ball State signee Robby Owens. In the final, McKinley advances to the Value City Arena with a win over Hilliard Davidson.

University of Dayton: #3 Beavercreek and #5 Cincinnati St. Xavier head this field. St. X spent the majority of the season as the top-ranked club in the state until losing to Elder. No revenge this time around as Elder nips St. X again. Beavercreek has been winning for years with tough defense but has never gotten over the hump. Playing in the tough GMC, Hamilton finished the regular season under .500. The Big Blue knocked off undefeated and #2 Cincinnati Winton Woods in the sectional and are now in the regional. Beavercreek over Hamilton in a low-scoring game. Beavercreek reached the regional final in '99 only to be nipped by eventual champ Moeller. The Swami went back and forth on this one but is going with the Beavers over Cincinnati Elder, the '73, '74, and '93 state champ.

## STATE

The final four consists of Cleveland St. Ignatius, Mansfield Senior, Canton McKinley, and Beavercreek. This is Beavercreek's first trip to the state tournament and McKinley's twenty-fifth. For the third consecutive year, D1 will close out the state tournament on Saturday night. In the semifinals, Mansfield Senior defeats Ignatius and Beavercreek defeats McKinley. In the championship game, Mansfield Senior defeats Beavercreek for the big school state crown. This is the third state championship for Tygers' Coach Greg Collins with the previous two coming at Lexington in 1989 and 1991.

## DIVISION II

# The Swami

Seven of the eighteen teams ranked in the final state poll are still playing. Only three teams (Lima Shawnee, Cleveland Benedictine, Wooster Triway) return to regional play for 2000 with Benedictine the only remaining team from last year's final four. Benedictine was also a state participant in 1997 and 1998. 1999 state champ Kettering Alter was nipped by Bellefontaine in the district final. D2 features two undefeated teams in #1 Wooster Triway and #2 Dayton Christian

## REGIONAL

Wright State University: #2 Dayton Christian and #6 Cincinnati Purcell-Marian head this field. In Keith Jackson, 1985 "AAA" state champ Purcell-Marian has one of the top juniors in the state. Look for P-M to eliminate Columbus Watterson. With foreign exchange students Romain Guessagba-Sato and Fidama Dotte-Tewele (I don't make this stuff up) leading the way, Christian has seldom been tested this season. However, the Crusaders did survive a scare from Cincinnati McNicholas in the district final. Dayton Christian over Bellefontaine in the other semi. In the final, the Swami likes Purcell-Marian to end Dayton Christian's undefeated season and advance to Columbus.

Ohio University: #11 Greenfield McClain heads the field in Athens. Both Thornville Sheridan and Cambridge have thumped opponents at the sectional and district levels. Cambridge held Rayland Buckeye to twenty-two points in a thirty-five point victory in the district final. Greenfield McClain stopped perennial power Portsmouth in their district final while West Holmes entered tournament play under .500 before catching fire. Cambridge over Sheridan and Greenfield McClain over West Holmes in semi-final games. In the final, Gene Ford's Cambridge squad wins another trip to Columbus with a win over McClain.

Bowling Green State University: #5 Willard and #15 Lima Shawnee head the field. Avon Lake stopped #4 Olmsted Falls to advance to BG while Eastmoor Academy was one of the stronger teams in the Columbus City League. Take Eastmoor in a struggle. Shawnee was seconds away from advancing to Columbus in '99 only to be nipped by Columbus Beechcroft. The nucleus of that team led

by Mike Marshall and Spike Dawson return to BG. Willard hasn't seen a regional since 1992. The Flashes were struggling in this year's tourney until demolishing Norwalk in their district final. The Swami likes Shawnee's experience over Willard. In the final, Shawnee benefits from their 1999 regional battle in edging out Eastmoor. This is the Indians' first trip to Columbus since Jeff Miller led the way in 1965.

Canton Civic Center: #1 Triway and #18 Warrensville Heights head up this field. Despite only two regular season losses and a D1 dominated schedule, Warrensville has gotten little respect in the polls. The Tigers defeated #10 Tallmadge in the district final while Canfield defeated #12 Beloit West Branch in the district. That was one of two overtime games for Canfield in the district. Take Warrensville Heights over Canfield. After consecutive D2 state crowns in '97 and '98, Benedictine was eliminated in the state semi-finals in 1999. Seniors dominated the Bengals and to make matters worse, their best underclassmen, Brew Story and Sean Coffey transferred to Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland Shaw respectively. Benedictine gained St. Ed's transfer Rian Powell, one of the top sophs in the state, but finished the regular season with a 7-13 record. The Bengals advanced to the regional with a district final win over #9 Perry. Triway has been top-ranked for much of the season. The Titans struggled in the district with an overtime win over #13 Fairless and a one-point victory over Louisville. Triway eliminates Benedictine. In the final, Juby Johnson leads Warrensville to an upset victory over Triway.

## STATE

The field consists of Cincinnati Purcell-Marian, Cambridge, Shawnee, and Warrensville Heights. This is Warrensville's first trip to the state while 2000 marks the fifth time Gene Ford has brought a Cambridge team to the final four. Purcell-Marian and Cambridge kick off the Seventy-Eighth Boys State Basketball Tournament on Thursday morning. Purcell-Marian edges Cambridge. Shawnee and Warrensville Heights battle in the second game with the Tigers defeating the Indians. In the Saturday morning final, Cincinnati Purcell-Marian earns the D2 state crown with a win over Warrensville.

## DIVISION III

Five of the eighteen teams in the final Associated

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Press poll are still playing. Only #1 Akron St Vincent-St. Mary's and #9 Cleveland Villa Angela-St Joseph remain from the top ten. Four teams (Cincinnati Madeira, St. V-St. M, Newton Falls, and Eastern Brown) return to the regional for 2000. Madeira is the only team returning from the 1999 final four. '99 state champ Bedford Chanel was eliminated by VA-SJ in a district final. St. Vincent-St. Mary's and #14 Eastern Brown are the only undefeated teams remaining.

## REGIONAL

University of Toledo: #12 Lima Central Catholic heads this field. Neither Cuyahoga Falls Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy nor Elmwood expected to make the regional. This is CVCA's first trip ever while Elmwood has waited since 1976 to get back. CVCA with a big win over Lorain Clearview in the district makes the long trip worthwhile by edging the Royals. On the other hand, LCC and Ontario have been regular regional participants over the past decade. LCC advanced to the regional with a big win over #15 Bluffton and has other solid tournament wins over '99 state runner-up Coldwater and perennial power Wayne Trace. Look for the deliberate T-Birds to get by Ontario. In the final, LCC easily defeats CVCA for their first trip to Columbus since 1994.

Wright State: No ranked teams at the Nut. Very balanced field with three teams having twenty wins and the other at nineteen. Jamestown Greeneview advanced to the regional with a district final win over #8 Twin Valley South. Madeira graduated all five starters from the 1999 state qualifier. Jamestown Greeneview over Madeira. Columbus Ready over Versailles in another pick 'em game. In the final, look for Ready to advance with a win over Greeneview. This is the first trip to the state tournament for Ready since their 1973 "AA" state championship. That was the second of two consecutive state crowns won by Ready.

Canton Field House: #1 St. Vincent-St. Mary's and #9 Villa Angela-St Joseph head the field. St Vincent-St. Mary's will remain a story as long as Keith Dambrot, the former Ashland University and Central Michigan head coach, runs the show. This

year, Dambrot brought in LeBron James, the best freshman in Ohio, and Aly Samabaly, a Muslim from France, to join forces with Maverick Carter. All made first team all district. USA Today ranks the Irish as the best team in Ohio regardless of class. Newton Falls hasn't been pushed in tournament play and has 1999 regional experience. St. V.-St. M. could be caught looking ahead but will be too strong for Newton Falls. Villa Angela-St. Joseph eliminated #2 Bedford Chanel in the district final. VASJ disposes of a good Columbiana Crestview club in the other semi-final. In reality, the final is for the D3 state championship. Akron St Vincent-St. Mary's over Joe's in Ted Kwasniak's final game as coach of the Vikings.

Ohio University: #11 Canal Winchester and #14 Sardinia Eastern Brown head this field. Excellent regional with teams having a combined 86-8 record. Amazingly, Eastern Brown went undefeated and couldn't crack the top ten. Malvern defeated #4 Bellaire in a district final while Eastern Brown stopped #10 Belpre in their district final. Eastern Brown nips Malvern. Canal Winchester needed three overtimes to nip Marion Elgin in a district final while Wheelersburg defeated #6 Chesapeake in their district final. The Burg stops Canal Winchester. In the final, Eastern Brown squeezes by Wheelersburg to advance to Columbus. To the Swami, Sardinia Eastern Brown is eerily reminiscent of Seeman North Adams. Can Jim Marquette be too far behind?

## STATE

Lima Central Catholic, Columbus Bishop Ready, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary's, and Sardinia Eastern Brown make up the final four. This is Eastern Brown's first trip to the state tournament. LCC defeats Ready and St. Vincent-St. Mary's easily handles Eastern Brown in the semi-final games. In the finals, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary's defeats Lima Central Catholic to earn the D3 state championship and cap off an undefeated season. This is the Irish's second state championship.

## DIVISION IV

Eight of the sixteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have reached the regional. Four teams (Worthington Christian, Lucas, Fort Jennings, Berlin Hiland) make return trips to the regional in 2000. '99 champ Worthington Christian

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and Berlin Hiland return from the 1999 final four. Hiland also participated in the 1998 final four. Worthington Christian is the only undefeated team remaining in D4.

## REGIONAL

Columbus Fairgrounds: #1 Worthington Christian and #8 Lucas lead the field. Glouster Trimble handily defeated #9 Reedsville Eastern in a district final. Lucas defeats Glouster Trimble. Worthington Christian outscored its first three tournament opponents by almost fifty points per game, but the Warriors were pushed by a good Morral Ridgedale team in the district final before rallying to win. Worthington Christian big over Mowrystown Whiteoak. Lucas lost by eleven to WC in the 1999 regional. More of the same in 2000 with Worthington Christian advancing to the final four. This place is still a dump.

University of Dayton: #7 St. Henry and #11 Mechanicsburg head the field. St. Henry battled with #3 Marion Local for Midwestern Athletic Conference supremacy during the regular season. Marion Local was eliminated in the sectional by a good Minster team. St. Henry then destroyed Minster in a district final. Take St. Henry over a strong Mechanicsburg team. Tipp City Bethel defeated #5 Cincinnati Seven Hills in a district final. Bethel over Fort Loramie. In the final, St. Henry eliminates Tipp City Bethel to advance to the final four.

University of Toledo: #6 Tiffin Calvert and #10 Fort Jennings lead this group. This is the deepest and most balanced of the D4 regional fields. Fort Jennings was considered a certainty for the 1999 final four but the Musketeers lost to Edgerton in the regional final. Junior-dominated Stryker is making their first trip to the regional since 1978. Take perimeter-oriented Jennings over Stryker's defense and inside game. This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for Kalida. Calvert has losses to Fremont St. Joseph and Liberty-Benton after opening the season with fourteen straight wins. Kalida's defense over Calvert's up-and-down game. In the final, Fort Jennings gets revenge over PCL rival Kalida and advances to Columbus with a regional win.

Canton Field House: #2 Berlin Hiland and #15 Richmond Heights head this field. Richmond Heights' four tournament victories have been by an average of thirty-seven points a game. Richmond Heights advances with a win over Southington Chalker. Berlin Hiland returns basically the same team that advanced to the state in 1999 before falling to Fort Recovery. Jackson-Milton finished the regular season under .500 but has run off three wins in the tournament. Hiland big. Richmond Heights has an excellent opportunity to upset Hiland. Look for Hiland's experience at the regional level to prevail. This will mark the fifth time that Perry Reese has taken the Hawks to the final four.

## STATE

Worthington Christian, St. Henry, Fort Jennings, and Berlin Hiland make up the final four. This will be Fort Jennings' first trip to Columbus. Other than their district final win over Ridgedale, Worthington Christian's only close game has been Columbus Northland. St. Henry and Worthington Christian will be the best game of the state tournament. WC will edge the Redskins. Fort Jennings and Hiland are both perimeter-oriented teams. Hiland advances to the final. In the final, Sam Smith and Jason Weakley lead Worthington Christian to an easy victory over Berlin Hiland for their second consecutive D4 state championship.

The opinions expressed in Trail Trash are those of the Swami. See you in Columbus.

Publisher:	David Spengler
Expert:	The Swami
Editorial Director:	David Sigler
Art Director Emeritus:	Kent Lincoln