

Trail Trash

2008 OHSA High School Basketball Tournament

**Published exclusively by Dave Spengler
and on the net at www.davey1.com**

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



Welcome to the fifteenth annual edition of Trail Trash and The Swami. This also marks the fifth year of our online edition on www.davey1.com. Thank you Al Gore. While we may not be entertaining, we try to be somewhat accurate and informative.

How did it get to be tournament time already? It seems like the season just started. Here we are making tournament predictions and we're talking about the Super Bowl. Last year, the OHSA began having tournament draws all around the state on the same Sunday. Since some of the other districts around the state start their tournament a week to 10 days (nothing beats February madness) before the tournament gets going around here, the Northwest Ohio draw got moved up a week. In a normal year, that would have moved the draw up to around February 3. Add in this year's early Easter pushing the boys state tournament up a week, and here we are in late January and early February talking about a tournament set to get started on February 19. Hopefully, it was the Easter weekend pushing the state tournament up a week rather than the Smucker's Stars on Ice taking over the Value City Arena. On second thought, why doesn't the OHSA just move Easter back a week?

In addition to the early start date for the tournament, 2008 will see a number of changes. These include teams in different divisions, new tournament sites, and the elimination of one of the D4 districts. In the new enrollment figures that are being used for the 2008 and 2009 tournaments, Northwest Ohio experienced a reduction in the number of D4 teams. Applying this number to the statewide numbers, it was determined that NW Ohio's regional representation would decrease from

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6 to 5 teams. That is the reason why the district winner at Willard will now be headed to the regional at BG rather than the usual trip to the beloved Barn in Columbus. There was no conspiracy by the boys at the OHSA on this one, just simple mathematics. We will highlight the changes in the teams and tournament sites as we break down the divisions.

The Swami feels an editorial comment coming on so you may just want to skip down to the next paragraph. Two topics that have surfaced this season are whether a shot clock is necessary in high school basketball and whether the three point line should be moved from 19'9" to 20'9" in order to be consistent with the change that will take place in college basketball next season. Talk of a shot clock in Northwest Ohio basketball is typically synonymous with Holgate. In the Swami's opinion, there is no reason to add it. Teams don't often hold the ball for more than thirty-five or forty-five seconds (or whatever number that would be used on a shot clock) without firing up a shot. There isn't enough of a problem to offset the game management and financial issues, and it would not add to the quality or excitement of the game. The Swami also sees absolutely no reason to extend the three-point line. Shooting skills, at least the mid-range game, have eroded since the implementation of the current line twenty years ago. Why make it even worse?

The ouija board ended up in the dumpster after last year's picks, so we'll just have to wing it. Let's go to our predictions.

DIVISION I

The changes in D1 from last season are relatively few, but one of those changes will have a major impact on the '08 tournament landscape in NW Ohio. Toledo Libbey dropped from D1 to D2, and the Cowboys have to be considered one of the favorites to win a D2 state title. Although it significantly weakens the Toledo D1 district field, the move gives five or six teams a legitimate shot at winning the district crown. Celina also dropped out of D1 this season.

Perrysburg and Mansfield have gotten the most notoriety statewide. Perrysburg is undefeated as of this writing while Mansfield's losses are to Lexington and Orrville. Perrysburg has been tested on several occasions and there are questions about the strength of Pburg's schedule and of the Northern Lakes League as a whole. Mansfield Senior has an impressive win over Warren Harding, but they too face questions about the caliber of play in the Ohio Cardinal Conference.

Similar to previous years, the D1 tourney in NW Ohio will use a "super sectional" format. Sectional winners at Willard and Liberty-Benton will remain at those sites for district semi-final games with the district final played at BGSU. The winners from the two Toledo sectionals will advance to the University of Toledo for the district with the winners from Waite playing in one semi-final and the winners from Central Catholic playing in the second semi-final game. The two district winners from NW Ohio will advance to the regional at the University of Akron eliminating the "home court advantage" that the Toledo teams have enjoyed over the past several years. District winners from Canton (Massillon Perry, Canton Timken, Uniontown Lake) and Copley (Akron Firestone, Barberton, Kent Roosevelt) will join the two NW Ohio district winners at the JAR. The Toledo and Bowling Green district winners are currently scheduled to play each other in Akron. With a full slate of regional games in D2, D3, and D4 at BG along with questions about the availability of Savage Hall, it appears the game will indeed be played in Akron.

SECTIONALS

WILLARD: Mansfield Senior and Ashland are the top seeds. Mansfield Senior has not lost a game at the new Pete Henry Gymnasium since moving into the new school in 2004. T.J. Lindsey and Di'Nero Ramseur are the top players for the Tygers. Mansfield is going for their 7th straight sectional championship. Ashland got a late start after a deep run in the football playoffs and slumped in early January. It looks like the Arrows have their second wind with wins over Orrville and Lexington and have a good chance to advance. 5'5" Cole Prophet is the top player for Sandusky, but inconsistency has plagued the Blue Streaks. The rest of the teams at Willard had already reached double figures in losses at the time of the draw, although Mansfield Madison could pull an upset.

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Semifinals-Mansfield Madison over Marion Harding;
Sandusky over Fremont Ross

Finals-Mansfield Senior over Mansfield Madison; Ashland
over Sandusky

LIBERTY-BENTON: Perrysburg and Findlay are the top seeds. Perrysburg is very balanced with four players averaging between twelve and fifteen points per game to go along with a veteran point guard in David Boyce. Findlay's Luke Kraus is the lone starter back from the 2007 regional runner-up team. The Trojans currently lead the Greater Buckeye Conference. Lima Senior is the wild card in this sectional. The Spartans' success will depend on which team decides to show up. Sophomore Anton Hutchins is the top player for Lima. Speaking of showing up, Anthony Wayne's team bus recently showed up for a game at Lima Shawnee. Only problem was that the Generals were playing at Lima Senior. Let's hope AW can find their way to Liberty-Benton. The other NLL teams shouldn't be a factor at Liberty-Benton.

Semifinals-Anthony Wayne over Maumee; Lima Senior over
Bowling Green

Finals-Findlay over Anthony Wayne; Lima Senior over
Perrysburg

TOLEDO WAITE: Toledo St. John's Jesuit and Sylvania Southview are the top seeds. St. John's is in a rare rebuilding year and normally starts five underclassmen. The Titans are still in contention for the Toledo City League title. Coach Ed Heintschel got his 500th career win earlier in the season. St. John's has won 10 consecutive sectional championships. Southview is chasing Perrysburg in the NLL. 5'6" Tim Hausfeld is the top player for the Cougars. Shaun Joplin of Southview is ineligible and out for the season, but the Cougars haven't skipped a beat in his absence. It appears the most excitement at Scott was finding out what transfers would make their way to Collingwood Avenue during the off-season. This year it's David Sweeney (Whitmer) and Antwan Jones (Woodward) becoming Bulldogs. Scott has been disappointing. 6'9" Zac Taylor missed the first half of the season for Clay. The Eagles are better since Taylor returned, but don't expect them to have much of an impact on the tournament.

Semifinals-Scott over Springfield; St. John's Jesuit over
Woodward; Clay over Bowsher

Finals-Southview over Scott; St. John's Jesuit over Clay

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC: Toledo Waite and Toledo

Whitmer are the top seeds. Waite has a nucleus of seniors that decided to stay at Waite rather than jumping ship when the vultures from other TCL schools came calling. Khari Riley became the first player in Waite history to score 1,000 career points when he hit that mark earlier this season. Whitmer is near the top in the TCL, but hasn't shown they can contend with Libbey and St. John's. Ryne Smith of the Panthers signed with Purdue during the early signing period. St. Francis has been coming on strong since the beginning of the new year. Kevin Henry is one of the top players in the TCL. Start was the pre-season pick for 11th in the TCL, but has been much more competitive than expected. The bracket including Start, St. Francis, and Whitmer should be very interesting with any of the three having a shot at advancing.

Semifinals-Rogers over Northview; St. Francis over Start

Finals-Waite over Rogers; St. Francis over Whitmer

DISTRICTS

Mansfield Senior will meet Ashland in a district semi-final at Willard while Findlay and Lima Senior play in the semi-final at Liberty-Benton.

Semifinals-Mansfield Senior over Ashland; Findlay over Lima Senior

BGSU: Findlay broke Mansfield Senior's streak of three consecutive district championships last season. Note: The district final won't start until 8:00 p.m. since the BG men and women both have games on March 1.

Finals-Mansfield Senior over Findlay

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: St. John's is the two-time defending district champ and has 5 district championships in the past 6 seasons. With Libbey in D2, any of the four teams has a great shot at the championship. Note: The district final on March 1 is scheduled for 11:00 a.m.

Semifinals-St. John's Jesuit over Southview; St. Francis over Waite

Finals-St. John's Jesuit over St. Francis

DIVISION II

We've already discussed Libbey dropping down to D2 and their impact on the '08 tourney. In addition to Celina dropping from D1 to D2, Ontario and Port Clinton have gone from D2 to D3.

Libbey has been near the top in the Associated Press poll all season. The Cowboys spent one week as the state's top-ranked team in D2, but a four-point loss to Saginaw, the top ranked big school in Michigan, dropped Libbey in the poll. That shows how meaningful the polls are. Fostoria and

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Lexington have also been fixtures in the top ten. To date, Fostoria has only a November overtime loss to Norwalk while Lexington has losses to Ontario and Orrville. Although not in the top ten, Lima Shawnee has also been included in the poll.

With renovations scheduled to begin at the University of Toledo's Savage Hall in early March, the D2 regional has been moved to Bowling Green's ancient Anderson Arena. The Ashland district winner will meet the winner of a weak Westlake district (Parma Heights Holy Name, Vermilion, Avon) and the BG district winner will play one of the Columbus district winners (Columbus Eastmoor, Columbus St. Francis DeSales, Buckeye Valley) in the semifinals. Canal Winchester is playing in the other Columbus district with the winner of that district heading to the regional at Wright State.

SECTIONALS

LIMA SENIOR: Lima Shawnee and Van Wert are the top seeds. Shawnee is currently leading the Western Buckeye League. Shawnee's chance of moving into the top ten in the statewide poll took a blow with a big loss to D4 New Knoxville. Shawnee's other loss is to Toledo Start. Jerin Butler (Jamar's brother) is the top player for the Indians. Van Wert had heavy graduation losses from their '07 regional team, but the Cougars return leading scorer Chris Morrow. Morrow recently surpassed the 1,000 mark in career points. Van Wert is chasing Shawnee in the WBL race. The rest of this sectional is mediocre at best, as the WBL is a bit down this season. Shawnee appears to be a lock for the district. The upset bug could bite Van Wert.

Semifinals-Elida over St. Marys; Van Wert over Wapakoneta; Celina over Lima Bath

Finals-Lima Shawnee over Elida; Van Wert over Celina



ANTHONY WAYNE: Toledo Libbey and Toledo Central Catholic are the top seeds. OSU recruit William Buford leads Libbey. The Cowboys are big and deep and get double figure scoring from Julius Wells and Brad Sandridge in addition to Buford. In addition to their loss to Saginaw, Libbey received an early season wakeup call from Central Catholic. The next four seeds at AW (Central Catholic, Napoleon, Wauseon, and Defiance) all jumped into the other bracket in order to avoid the Cowboys. Central is on the verge of falling out of the Toledo City League race, but the Irish have the win over Libbey. Napoleon is in contention in the GBC. Wauseon suffered a big blow when Elliott Mealer was injured and lost for the season after being involved in a tragic auto accident. The Indians have

won 5 straight sectional titles. Defiance is much improved, and the Bulldogs are chasing Shawnee in the WBL race. Central, Napoleon, Wauseon, and Defiance in the same bracket will result in a great night of basketball in the semifinals.

Semifinals-Rossford over Bryan; Central Catholic over Napoleon; Defiance over Wauseon

Finals-Libbey over Rossford; Defiance over Central Catholic

SANDUSKY: Fostoria and Norwalk are the top seeds. This is a good sectional with 6 of the 8 teams above .500 at the time of the draw. Fostoria leads the Northern Ohio League. The Redmen are deep and experienced. Chase Munoz leads a veteran cast for Fostoria. Kyle Kurtz and 7' Kyle Smith are top players for Norwalk. The Truckers have recently fallen out of the hunt for their first NOL title since 1962. Clyde leads the Sandusky Bay Conference. Alex Gillett is the top player the Fliers. Eastwood is a newcomer to Sandusky and happy to get away from the AW sectional. The Eagles are currently tied for the Suburban Lakes League lead. Tiffin Columbian is much improved while Perkins is above .500 despite heavy graduation losses. Bellevue is down this season, but Norwalk better not be looking ahead.

Semifinals-Fostoria over Oak Harbor; Tiffin Columbian over Perkins; Norwalk over Bellevue; Clyde over Eastwood

Finals-Fostoria over Tiffin Columbian; Norwalk over Clyde

MANSFIELD SENIOR: Lexington and Shelby are the top seeds. This is another solid sectional. Lexington is deep and balanced with three starters averaging in double figures. Lex handed Mansfield Senior their only loss. Shelby is chasing Fostoria in the NOL. Matt Sommer is one of the top players in the league. Although out of the WBL race, Kenton is having their best season in years. 6'9" Garrick Sherman is one of the top juniors in the state. Following a slow start, Willard has put together a solid season. Kevin Deidrick is the top player for the Flashes. 2005 D2 state champ and 2007 D2 state runner-up Upper Sandusky is giving up a whopping 89 points per game (the Rams are scoring just under 83). Junior Alex Falk recently went over 1,000 career points for the Rams.

Semifinals-Upper Sandusky over Galion; Willard over Kenton; Shelby over Clear Fork

Finals-Lexington over Upper Sandusky; Shelby over Willard

DISTRICTS

BGSU: Van Wert is the defending district champion. Will anyone challenge Libbey?

Semifinals-Shawnee over Defiance; Libbey over Van Wert

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Finals-Libbey over Shawnee

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY: Upper Sandusky is the defending district champion. Bellevue in '02 was the last team other than Upper or Willard to win this district.

Semifinals-Shelby over Fostoria; Lexington over Norwalk

Finals-Shelby over Lexington

DIVISION III

D3 is where we start seeing plenty of changes. Ontario and Port Clinton both dropped down from D2 to D3. Colonel Crawford, Hicksville, Liberty Center, Marion Local, Mohawk, Montpelier, Ottawa Hills, South Central, and Wynford all moved up from D4 to D3. Ayersville, Convoy Crestview, Delphos Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Seneca East, and Wayne Trace have moved down to D4. Needless to say, the D3 tournament looks much different this season. With these changes come some new tournament locations. Defiance, Wapakoneta, Findlay, and Galion have replaced Napoleon, Norwalk, Elida, and Lima Central Catholic as sectional sites. All the district sites are new with Napoleon, Elida, and Mansfield Senior replacing Toledo Waite, Ohio Northern, and Fostoria.

Liberty-Benton is undefeated and the top-ranked team in the state according to the Associated Press. Archbold, Marion Local, and St. Henry have also been included in the top ten throughout the season with St. Henry's appearance primarily based on reputation. Ontario and Wynford have also been receiving votes.

The three district winners from NW Ohio will join the Elyria district winner (Rocky River Lutheran West, Peninsula Woodridge, Lorain Clearview) at the Bowling Green regional. The Elyria district winner will take on the Elida district winner in one semi-final with the Mansfield district winner playing the Napoleon district winner in the other game. You have to like the chances of a NW Ohio team advancing to the state in D3.

SECTIONALS

DEFIANCE: Archbold and Tinora are the top seeds. Archbold has clinched at least a tie for the NWOAL championship. Gene Goering became Archbold's all-time leading scorer earlier in the season. The Blue Streaks have won 7 straight sectional championships. Tinora, Hicksville, and Fairview are evenly matched in the other bracket with Tinora getting the

second seed based on their wins over Hicksville and Fairview. Both Hicksville and Tinora have torched the Swami in the past. Any of those three GMC rivals has a real shot at advancing. Josh Vandemark is the top player for Hicksville. Paulding is improved but likely won't be a factor. Montpelier belongs in the D4 sectional at Bryan. Enough said.

Semifinals-Paulding over Montpelier; Fairview over Hicksville

Finals-Archbold over Paulding; Fairview over Tinora

SYLVANIA SOUTHWEST: Genoa and Ottawa Hills are the top seeds. Genoa has been a surprise in the SLL with the Comets currently tied for the league lead. Ottawa Hills is tied with Toledo Christian for the TAAC lead. Phillip Beans and Brent Abendroth are two of the top players in the TAAC although the 6'7" Beans has recently been slowed by injury. Swanton has enjoyed a solid season. Earlier in the season, Brad Betz became the second player in Swanton basketball history to surpass 1,000 points in a career. After returning two starters from their district championship team, more was expected from Evergreen. The Vikings have three starters averaging in double figures but not much beyond that. Evergreen does appear to be improving as the tournament approaches so don't be surprised if the Vikings pull the upset for their 5th straight sectional championship.

Semifinals-Swanton over Delta; Ottawa Hills over Liberty Center; Evergreen over Lake

Finals-Ottawa Hills over Evergreen; Swanton over Genoa

WAPAKONETA: Marion Local and St. Henry are the top seeds. Both Marion Local and Coldwater got off to late starts after winning state championships in football. Marion Local is heading for a showdown with New Knoxville for the MAC title. An inexperienced St. Henry team jumped out to a 7-0 start but has cooled of late. St. Henry has five consecutive sectional championships and two straight district titles. Parkway is having a solid season and has one of the top players in the MAC in Josh Fisher. The Panthers could be the surprise team at Wapak. Lima Central Catholic is in the midst of a rare down year, but the T-Birds are very young. When the T-Birds entered the Northwest Conference a year ago, there were those who thought that LCC would dominate the league.

Semifinals-Parkway over Lima Central Catholic; Coldwater over Spencerville

Finals-Marion Local over Parkway; Coldwater over St. Henry

FINDLAY: Liberty-Benton and Ottawa-Glandorf are the top seeds. Wasn't this supposed to be a rebuilding year at L-B with only Aaron Craft returning as starter from the 2007 state runner-up? The Eagles have been tested on several

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occasions but have found a way to remain undefeated. L-B's last loss during the regular season was to Wapakoneta back in February '06. Liberty-Benton has won 17 consecutive sectional titles under Steve Williman. Ottawa-Glandorf was a bit inconsistent earlier in the season and is fighting to stay in the WBL race. O-G has played a rugged schedule for a D3 team and appears to be peaking as the tournament approaches. Elmwood was the overwhelming favorite to take the SLL title, but dug themselves a hole during the first half of the season. The Royals have been playing much better of late. Bluffton has put together a solid season. Mohawk's streak of 4 straight sectional titles is likely to end this season.

Semifinals-Mohawk over Otsego; Ottawa-Glandorf over Lakota; Elmwood over Bluffton

Finals-Liberty-Benton over Mohawk; Ottawa-Glandorf over Elmwood

GALION: Ontario and Wynford are the top seeds. Perennial North Central Conference powers Ontario and Wynford are back together in D3. Ontario leads the NCC thanks to two close wins over the Royals. Jake Mochaskay is the top player for Ontario. Wynford has 12 straight sectional championships to go along with district championships in each of the past two seasons while playing in D4. Surprising Colonel Crawford is having an excellent season. The Eagles have one of the better players in the NCC in Austin Smith. South Central has put together a solid season while New London has been disappointing after being considered a favorite for the Firelands Conference title. New London has been playing better recently.

Semifinals-New London over Bucyrus; Wynford over Ashland Crestview; Colonel Crawford over South Central

Finals-Ontario over New London; Wynford over Colonel Crawford

OLD FORT: Western Reserve and Gibsonburg are the top seeds. Western Reserve is currently leading the Firelands Conference. The only loss for the Roughriders came at the hands of Sandusky Perkins. WR has 4 straight sectional titles under coach Chris Sheldon. Gibsonburg is currently battling Genoa and Eastwood for the SLL lead. The Bears won a district title in '06. Gibsonburg's Matt Kreglow is one of the top players in the SLL. Port Clinton is very young with 5 sophomores and a freshman seeing significant playing time. The Redskins appear to be a year away from making some noise. The remaining four teams all had losses in double



figures at the time of the draw. Edison and Margaretta are the best of that group. The opening game will be a shootout between Vince Palka of Huron and Corey Witker of Woodmore.

Semifinals-Woodmore over Huron; Gibsonburg over Margaretta; Port Clinton over Edison

Finals-Western Reserve over Woodmore; Gibsonburg over Port Clinton

DISTRICTS

NAPOLEON: Evergreen won the Waite district in 2007.

Semifinals-Archbold over Ottawa Hills; Fairview over Swanton

Finals-Archbold over Fairview

ELIDA: St. Henry won the Ohio Northern district in '07.

Semifinals-Ottawa-Glandorf over Marion Local; Liberty-Benton over Coldwater

Finals-Ottawa-Glandorf over Liberty-Benton

MANSFIELD SENIOR: This district replaces the Fostoria district that Liberty-Benton won in 2007. Wynford and Western Reserve is a great match-up.

Semifinals-Ontario over Gibsonburg; Wynford over Western Reserve

Finals-Ontario over Wynford

DIVISION IV

There are plenty of changes in D4 as well. We previously explained the "downsizing" of D4 resulting in the elimination of two sectionals and one of the districts. While the coffee was still working for the Swami, we also mentioned that 9 teams moved up from D4 to D3 with 6 teams dropping down to D4 from D3. If you want the details, you can find them in our D3 narrative. Bluffton, Bowling Green, and Tiffin Columbian are in as new sectional sites while Wauseon, Sylvania Northview, Riverdale, Hopewell Loudon, and Kenton are out as sectional sites. The Fostoria district has been eliminated.

Undefeated New Knoxville is the state's top ranked D4 team according to the Associated Press. New Knoxville was also the D4 poll champion in 2007. As usual, D4 in NW Ohio is getting plenty of love with Ayersville and Ada also in the top ten and Fort Recovery knocking on the door. Toledo Christian, Van Buren, and Pandora-Gilboa have also been receiving votes.

District winners from Willard and Liberty-Benton will play in one regional semifinal at BG's Anderson Arena with the

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Elida and Napoleon district winners meeting in the other game. The Wapakoneta district winner will be headed to the University of Dayton to be joined by the winners of the three Dayton districts. The Wapak winner will meet the winner of the Dayton district that includes Springfield Catholic Central, New Madison Tri-Village, and Houston in a regional semifinal.

SECTIONALS

COLDWATER: New Knoxville and Fort Recovery are the top seeds. Top ranked New Knoxville has dominated their opponents so far this season outscoring them almost 30 points per game. The Rangers have great balance with five players averaging in double figures and another chipping in more than 9 a game. The last regular season loss for New Knoxville was back in February '06 to St. Henry. Fort Recovery has put together a solid season. In Greg Kahlig, the Indians have one of the top players in the MAC. New Bremen and Minster are mired in the second division of the MAC, but both are capable of pulling off the upset. 6'9" Scott Schnelle is the top player for New Bremen. Minster recently handed Marion Local their first MAC defeat.

Semifinals-Lima Perry over Waynesfield-Goshen; New Bremen over Minster

Finals-New Knoxville over Lima Perry; Fort Recovery over New Bremen

LIMA BATH: Ada and Lima Temple Christian are the top seeds. Ada got off to a late start following a deep run into the football playoffs. Ada is undefeated in the Northwest Conference and has lost to New Knoxville and Kenton outside the league. Zac Dysert is the top player for the Bulldogs. Ada is an overwhelming favorite to garner their 5th straight sectional crown. Lima Temple Christian got the second seed because somebody had to. Temple is the NWCC champion and has a fine player in Clayton Leimeister. The rest of this sectional is not a pretty sight. Allen East, Hardin Northern, Upper Scioto Valley, and Ridgmont are a combined 7-59 as of this writing. Ouch. Three of those schools have never been basketball powers, but it is hard to believe how far USV has fallen.

Semifinals- Hardin Northern over Ridgmont; Allen East over Upper Scioto Valley

Finals-Ada over Hardin Northern; Lima Temple Christian over Allen East

VAN WERT: Wayne Trace and Antwerp are the top seeds.

The lineup at Van Wert is always full of traditional powers. Top seed Wayne Trace is the only one of those traditional powers that is above .500 at the present time. Wayne Trace is currently battling Ayersville for the GMC title. Aaron Hockenberry is the top player for the Raiders. Antwerp is also in the upper half of the GMC. Boston Hormann and Bob Bragg lead the way for the Archers. Delphos Jefferson is the third team at VW that is currently over .500. Convoy Crestview, Delphos St. John's, Ottoville, and Lincolnview have all been inconsistent. Delphos St. John's recently lost their leading scorer, Bob Koester, for the season with a knee injury. Ottoville has a streak of 4 consecutive sectional titles that is likely to end.

Semifinals-Ottoville over Lincolnview; Antwerp over Delphos St. John's; Convoy Crestview over Delphos Jefferson

Finals-Wayne Trace over Ottoville; Antwerp over Convoy Crestview

BLUFFTON: Pandora-Gilboa and Arlington are the top seeds. A very good sectional. Not much separates Arlington, Pandora-Gilboa, Kalida, and Fort Jennings so there should be some great sectional final games barring an upset in the semi-finals. Pandora-Gilboa and Arlington are both in the upper half of the BVC. The top 5 teams (L-B, Van Buren, P-G, Arlington, Vanlue) in the BVC are currently 42-2 against non-conference opponents with those 2 losses to Ada. Kalida has 8 wins in a row as of this writing. Fort Jennings has been a mystery as they have wins over Ayersville and Antwerp but have lost to mediocre teams. Derek Geise is the top player for the Musketeers. Riverdale is having their best season in several years while Columbus Grove's streak of 5 straight sectional titles is coming to an end. Don't be too surprised if one of the PCL teams "upsets" a BVC team.

Semifinals-Kalida over Columbus Grove; Arlington over Cory-Rawson; Fort Jennings over Riverdale

Finals-Pandora-Gilboa over Kalida; Arlington over Fort Jennings

BRYAN: Pettisville and Stryker are the top seeds. Once upon a time when the late Don Huber was coaching at Continental, the tournament at Ottawa-Glandorf (or wherever) was packed with strong teams. When it was his turn to place the Pirates on the bracket, Coach Huber said "I'll pass and go to the Bryan sectional." That's typical of the lack of respect that the Bryan sectional has received over the years. There are more than a few who attribute Holgate's string of district titles to the Tigers being in the same district as the Bryan sectional teams. Edgerton, Fayette, North Central, and Hilltop aren't having stellar years, but they're probably better than the bottom four at Bath. This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for Pettisville but the Blackbirds are leading the BBC. Stryker is chasing Pettisville in the BBC and is playing well of late. Edon could sneak up on Stryker.

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Semifinals-North Central over Hilltop; Stryker over Edgerton; Edon over Fayette

Finals-Pettisville over North Central; Stryker over Edon

OTTAWA-GLANDORF: Ayersville and Patrick Henry are the top seeds. Ayersville lost in overtime to Fort Jennings back in November and hasn't been beaten since. The Pilots have clinched at least a share of the GMC title and are headed for a showdown with Wayne Trace. Patrick Henry got off to a bit of a slow start following a deep run in the football playoffs. The Patriots have played a brutal schedule for a D4 team. Twins Kyle and Kevin Tietje pace PH. It has been a typical season for Holgate. The Tigers are averaging around 34 points per game (including outburst of 18, 20, 21, and 23) while giving up around 31 per game (including games of 25, 24, 18, and 7). Holgate is out of the GMC race but very dangerous come tournament time. McComb is a middle of the pack BVC team despite being young. Miller City held Holgate to 20 in a big win. Continental might be the youngest team in the state with freshmen and sophomores joining a lone senior. Leipsic is much improved under long-time O-G assistant Scott Maag.

Semifinals-Holgate over Leipsic; McComb over Miller City; Patrick Henry over Continental

Finals-Holgate over Ayersville; Patrick Henry over McComb

BOWLING GREEN: Toledo Christian and Van Buren are the top seeds. The Swami used to make fun of the old BG sectional with its weak teams and the poor lighting in the Bowling Green gym. BG returns as a sectional site, and the poor lighting in the gym has been replaced by "Fear Von" t-shirts. That's another story for another day. The field of teams is no longer weak with a cast headed by Toledo Christian and Van Buren. Toledo Christian experienced heavy graduation losses from their '07 team that was undefeated until losing to VB in the district final. The Eagles return an excellent big man in 6'6" Ethan Michael. Two other Eagles have stepped up to join Michael as double figure scorers this season. TC's only loss to date is to Ottawa Hills. VB returns most of its regional runner-up team from 2007. 1,000 point scorer Matt Phillips leads the Black Knights. VB is currently tied for second in the BVC. Cardinal Stritch has been solid in the TAAC while Arcadia is having their best season in a number of years.

Semifinals-Arcadia over Northwood; Van Buren over North Baltimore; Cardinal Stritch over Maumee Valley Country Day

Finals-Toledo Christian over Arcadia; Van Buren over Cardinal Stritch

TIFFIN COLUMBIAN: Vanlue and Tiffin Calvert are the top

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seeds. Vanlue joins the best of the MAL at Columbian. Vanlue has put together a solid season losing only to Liberty-Benton, Van Buren, and Pandora-Gilboa. Josh Kloepper and Nick Lee form a solid one-two punch for the Wildcats. Really tough to figure out these MAL teams come tournament time so there come be some upsets. Calvert is currently undefeated in the MAL while both Carey and New Riegel are playing well of late. Hopewell-Loudon got their usual late start due to football. The Chieftains have done well in league play but haven't fared as well outside the MAL. Carey's 6'7" Mike Dennis recently shattered a backboard while "shooting around" with his varsity teammates prior to the start of a junior varsity game. Needless to say, both the varsity and JV games were delayed. Bring it home Jerome.

Semifinals-New Riegel over Fostoria St. Wendelin; Tiffin Calvert over Seneca East; Carey over Hopewell-Loudon

Finals-Vanlue over New Riegel; Carey over Tiffin Calvert

PORT CLINTON: Sandusky St. Mary's and Norwalk St. Paul are the top seeds. Sandusky St. Mary's is battling Clyde and Port Clinton for the SBC crown. Ryan Heath of the Panthers went over 1,000 career points earlier in the season. Norwalk St. Paul trails only Western Reserve and Plymouth in the Firelands Conference. The Flyers appear to be peaking as tournament time approaches. Monroeville might not be Augie's Eagles but this version of the Eagles is having their best season in years. Monroeville plays up-tempo and is averaging over 83 points per game. St. Paul beat Monroeville 100-93 back in January despite St. Paul committing an astounding 44 turnovers in the game. Danbury is the best of the rest at PC. Bettsville has already racked up 6 wins this season which is a good season for the Bobcats. Sophomore Andrew Hartsel of Bettsville is averaging over 22 points per contest.

Semifinals-Fremont St. Joseph over Old Fort; Monroeville over Danbury; Norwalk St. Paul over Bettsville

Finals-Sandusky St. Mary's over Fremont St. Joseph; Norwalk St. Paul over Monroeville

LEXINGTON: Plymouth and Lucas are the top seeds. Much was expected of Plymouth this year despite the Big Red fielding a relatively young team. Plymouth's only losses are to Western Reserve in Firelands Conference play. Sophomore Brook Turson is probably the top player in the FC while 6'7" Jacob Furr provides support. There were some shenanigans involving the North Central Conference coaches at the tournament draw with a five-win Lucas team getting the second seed over Mansfield St. Peter's. That's why they play the games. To their credit, Lucas does have a win over NCC power Ontario. Earlier in the season it appeared that Buckeye

Central be a contender in this sectional, but the Bucks have hit the skids.

Semifinals-Buckeye Central over Mansfield Christian; Mansfield St. Peter's over Crestline

Finals-Plymouth over Buckeye Central; Mansfield St. Peter's over Lucas

DISTRICTS

WAPAKONETA: New Knoxville won the district in 2007.

Semifinals-New Knoxville over Lima Temple Christian; Fort Recovery over Ada

Finals-New Knoxville over Fort Recovery

ELIDA: Fort Jennings won the district in 2007.

Semifinals-Wayne Trace over Arlington; Pandora-Gilboa over Antwerp

Finals-Wayne Trace over Pandora-Gilboa
NAPOLEON: Holgate won the district in 2007. It was the 7th consecutive district title for the Tigers.

Semifinals-Patrick Henry over Pettisville; Holgate over Stryker

Finals-Patrick Henry over Holgate

LIBERTY-BENTON: Van Buren won the district in 2007. Toledo Christian has been the district runner-up the past three seasons.

Semifinals-Toledo Christian over Carey; Van Buren over Vanlue

Finals-Van Buren over Toledo Christian

WILLARD: Buckeye Central won the district in 2007.

Semifinals-Sandusky St. Mary's over Mansfield St. Peter's; Plymouth over Norwalk St. Paul

Finals-Plymouth over Sandusky St. Mary's

This has to be like reading War and Peace. If any of you made it this far, we hope you enjoyed it. Records and statistics are current as of February 2, 2008. All facts, fiction, errors, and opinions in Trail Trash are those of the Swami. We'll have our regional and state (and much shorter) edition ready to go some time before the regional tournament begins. Hope to see you somewhere down the tournament trail. Rock on.