

Trail Trash

for the 2008 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament

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And on the net at www.davey1.com

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



Welcome to the second edition of Trail Trash for the 2008 tournament season. The last two weeks have zipped by, and we are now in the stretch run. The weather has not been very cooperative thus far so let us hope that we can get through the final two weeks of the tournament without any more snowstorms, floods, or blizzards.

The Swami wrapped up sectional and district play with a 114-35 (77%) win/loss record. That included correctly picking seven district champions. If the Swami could have figured that Perrysburg, Toledo Whitmer, and Ayersville might actually make it out of the sectional, the numbers would have looked pretty good. If Ontario and Shelby win close district final games, the numbers would have looked outstanding. Oh well, those are just a bunch of excuses. Let's see how much we can butcher our regional and state picks.

Two of the four teams (Poland Seminary and New Knoxville) crowned as poll champions in the final Associated Press poll have advanced to the regional. Only one of the four defending state champions (Cincinnati North College Hill) from 2007 remains alive in the tournament.

Before we get started with the picks, the Swami would like to get a couple of things off his chest. When did it become the norm that players go shake hands with the opposing head coach (or an

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unfortunate assistant while the head coach is hiding) during pre-game introductions? The Swami would rather just see the players shake hands with the opposing players and have coaches do the same. Maybe it just bugs the Swami because on a number of occasions it appears there is a lack of sincerity and real sportsmanship in these gestures. At least it doesn't irritate the Swami as much as the cheerleader introductions.

As long as the Swami is airing his grievances, what is the deal with those old codgers that always seem to be sitting in the first row at tournament games at Bowling Green's Anderson Arena? They seem to act like they own the place or something.

Before this gets any more ridiculous and we lose a few more readers, we might as well go to the picks.

DIVISION 1

Seven of the fourteen teams ranked by the Associated Press in the final poll are playing in the regional. Six teams (Akron Firestone, Cincinnati St. Xavier, Trotwood-Madison, Cincinnati Withrow, Newark, Lakewood St. Edward's) were regional qualifiers in 2007. St. X, St. Ed's, and Trotwood-Madison also qualified for the regional in 2005 and 2006 as well. Canton Timken is the lone undefeated team in D1.

REGIONAL

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY: #6 Warren Harding

and #13 Mentor are ranked teams at the Wolstein Center. Mentor knocked off #8 Cleveland Glenville in a district final. St. Edward's returns to the regional despite losing All-American Delvon Roe and Alex Sterba to season-ending injuries back in December. Warren Harding's only loss is to Mansfield Senior. Warren Harding easily defeated Mentor in the regular season when Mentor played without leading scorer Joe Meyer. This is Elyria's first trip to the regional since 1977. Elyria's Bob Walsh has 643 career wins.

Semifinals – Lakewood St. Edward's over Elyria; Warren Harding over Mentor

Final – Warren Harding over Lakewood St. Edward's

XAVIER UNIVERSITY: #4 Cincinnati St. Xavier and #13 Cincinnati Withrow are ranked teams at the Cintas Center. St. Xavier is the defending regional champion and state runner-up. Both of St. Xavier's losses were to Moeller. Walt Gibler is the top player for St. X while 6'9" Yancy Gates leads Withrow. Withrow and St. Xavier met in the 2007 regional final. Huber Heights Wayne's only losses are to Centerville and Dayton Chaminade-Julienne.

Semifinals – Cincinnati St. Xavier over Cincinnati Princeton; Cincinnati Withrow over Huber Heights Wayne

Final – Cincinnati St. Xavier over Cincinnati Withrow

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON: #3 Perrysburg and #7 Canton Timken are ranked teams at the JAR. Canton Timken defeated #11 Massillon Perry in the district final. Toledo Whitmer and Perrysburg will be making the long trip from the Toledo area to Akron to play each other. Perrysburg's lone loss is to Sylvania Southview. Whitmer returns to the regional for the first time since 1989. Firestone was the regional runner-up to Canton GlenOak in 2007. Undefeated Timken breezed through the regular season, but their schedule was filled with D2 and D3 teams. Top players include Johnie Davis (Timken), Ramel Mitchell (Akron Firestone) and Ryne Smith (Whitmer).

Semifinals – Toledo Whitmer over Perrysburg; Akron Firestone over Canton Timken

Final – Akron Firestone over Toledo Whitmer

FAIRGROUNDS COLISEUM: #5 Dublin Scioto is the only ranked team at the barn. Newark eliminated #9 Zanesville in a district final. Trotwood-Madison defeated top ranked and defending D1 state champion Cincinnati Moeller in a district final. Westerville South eliminated #2 Columbus Northland in a district semi-final. Dublin Scioto's only loss is to Columbus Brookhaven. The Irish avenged that defeat in the district final to earn Scioto's first district title. Greg Avery is Newark's top player.

Semifinals – Newark over Trotwood-Madison; Dublin Scioto over Westerville South

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Final – Newark over Dublin Scioto

STATE

This will be the eleventh consecutive year that Division I has closed out the state tournament. Semi-final games will be played Friday night with the championship game on Saturday night.

Final Four – Warren Harding, Cincinnati St. Xavier, Akron Firestone, Newark

Semifinals – Cincinnati St. Xavier over Warren Harding; Newark over Akron Firestone

Final – Cincinnati St. Xavier over Newark

DIVISION II

Eight of the twelve teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have advanced to the regional tournament. Four teams (Chillicothe, Kettering Alter, Poland Seminary, Cleveland Benedictine) were regional qualifiers in 2007 while Benedictine also made it to the "sweet sixteen" in 2006. Undefeated teams are top-ranked Poland Seminary and St. Paris Graham.

REGIONAL

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY: #5 St. Paris Graham and #7 Canal Winchester are ranked teams at the Nutter Center. Dayton Chaminade-Julienne defeated two-time defending state champion and #3 Dayton Dunbar in a district final. Canal Winchester features 7'1" OSU recruit B.J. Mullens. Canal Winchester's only losses are to Newark and Cincinnati Withrow. Kettering Alter and Chaminade-Julienne split close games during the regular season. Graham's closest game has been a four-point win over Springfield Northwestern. Alter's Joe Petrocelli is in his forty-fourth season as head coach of the Knights.

Semifinals – Canal Winchester over St. Paris Graham; Dayton Chaminade-Julienne over Kettering Alter

Final – Canal Winchester over Dayton Chaminade-Julienne

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: #4 Toledo Libbey and #8 Columbus Eastmoor Academy are ranked teams at Anderson Arena. Eastmoor defeated #9 Columbus St. Francis DeSales in a district final. OSU recruit William Buford is the top player for Libbey. Libbey's losses are to Toledo Central Catholic and the top ranked team in Michigan, Saginaw

High. Libbey pounded Central Catholic in a district final. Lexington won D2 state championships in 1989 and 1991. This will be Vermilion's first trip ever to the regional.

Semifinals - Lexington over Vermilion; Toledo Libbey over Columbus Eastmoor Academy

Final – Toledo Libbey over Lexington

OHIO UNIVERSITY: #2 Chillicothe and #12 McArthur Vinton County are ranked teams at the Convo. Zanesville Maysville defeated #10 Dover in a district final. This will be the first regional appearance for Vinton County. Maysville will be making their first trip to the regional since 1972 while Meadowbrook's last appearance came in the early eighties. Chillicothe's only losses are to Columbus Brookhaven and Zanesville. Anthony Hitchens is the top player for Chillicothe. Vinton County's lone loss is to Chillicothe Huntington.

Semifinals – Chillicothe over McArthur Vinton County; Zanesville Maysville over Bylesville Meadowbrook

Final – Chillicothe over Zanesville Maysville

CANTON CIVIC CENTER: #1 Poland Seminary and #11 Akron Hoban are ranked teams at Canton. Poland Seminary was a 2007 state qualifier losing to Upper Sandusky in the semifinals. Poland has adopted Upper's frenetic style of play this season and did not score fewer than eighty points in a game until the district final. Akron Hoban avenged two of its three regular season losses in the district. Cleveland Benedictine is young with sophomores Cameron Wright and Dexter Jackson the top players.

Semifinals – Akron Hoban over Cleveland Benedictine; Poland Seminary over Perry

Final – Akron Hoban over Poland Seminary

STATE

Division II will kick off the eighty-sixth annual Boys State Basketball Tournament on Thursday, March 13. The D2 final will be the morning game on Saturday.

Final Four – Canal Winchester, Toledo Libbey, Chillicothe, Akron Hoban

Semifinals – Toledo Libbey over Canal Winchester; Chillicothe over Akron Hoban

Final – Toledo Libbey over Chillicothe

DIVISION III

Ten of the eighteen teams ranked by the Associated Press in the final poll are in the regional tournament. Top-ranked Liberty-Benton was eliminated by St. Henry in a district semi-final. Three teams (three-time defending state

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champion Cincinnati North College Hill, Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph, and Wheelersburg) were regional qualifiers in 2007 and 2006. VASJ joins North College Hill in making a fourth straight trip to the regional tournament. Bucyrus Wynford qualified for the regional the past two seasons in D4 before moving up to D3 this year. There are no undefeated teams in D3.

REGIONAL

CANTON FIELDHOUSE: #7 Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph and #12 Pymatuning Valley are ranked teams at Canton. Traditional power VASJ is seeking a third consecutive trip to the state tournament. Nate Barnes and Ashen Ward are top players for the Vikings. Smithville and Pymatuning Valley are making their initial appearances in the regional. Smithville's two losses were both to Creston Norwayne. The Smithies avenged the losses with a win over Norwayne in a district final. Pymatuning Valley's lone loss is to Highlands, Pennsylvania.

Semifinals – Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph over Smithville; Youngstown Ursuline over Pymatuning Valley

Final – Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph over Youngstown Ursuline

OHIO UNIVERSITY: #3 Sugarcreek Garaway and #6 Wheelersburg are ranked teams at the Convo. Columbus Ready eliminated #9 London Madison Plains in a district final. Wheelersburg defeated #3 Chillicothe Huntington in a district final. Wheelersburg is going after a third straight trip to the state tournament. Drew Spradlin is the top player for the Burg. Sugarcreek Garaway's three losses are to undefeated teams – two to D4 Malvern and the other to D1 Canton Timken. Michael Lamb is the top player for Proctorville Fairland.

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: #13 Ottawa-Glandorf, #15 Archbold, and #17 Bucyrus Wynford are ranked teams at Anderson Arena. Wynford defeated #9 Ontario in a district final. Two of Wynford's three regular season losses were to Ontario. John Shifley is the top player for the Royals. Archbold made trips to the state tournament in 2003, 2005, and 2006. Gene Goering is the all-time leading scorer for the Blue Streaks. Ottawa-Glandorf was the 2004 D2 state champ. O-G's Jake Meyer scored twenty consecutive points in a sectional semifinal game.

Semifinals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy; Wynford over Archbold

Final – Ottawa-Glandorf over Wynford



WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY: #2 Anna, #11 Cincinnati North College Hill and #17 Columbus Academy are ranked teams at the Nutter Center. Cincinnati Shroder Paideia defeated #5 Cincinnati Deer Park in a district semifinal. North College Hill has a twenty-five game winning streak in tournament play. Damon Butler is a four-year starter for NCH. The suspension of post player Alfonso McPherson could be a factor in the tournament run for the Trojans. Anna's only loss is to D4 New Knoxville. First it was Pymatuning Valley and now Shroder Paideia. The Swami doesn't get paid enough for this. Shroder Paideia is part of the Cincinnati Public Schools system and went 4-16 during the regular season playing primarily a D1 schedule.

Semifinals – Columbus Academy over Cincinnati Shroder Paideia; Cincinnati North College Hill over Anna

Final – Cincinnati North College Hill over Columbus Academy

STATE

The Division III semi-final games will be the day games on Friday. The championship game will be the late Saturday afternoon game.

Final Four – Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph, Wheelersburg, Ottawa-Glandorf, Cincinnati North College Hill

Semifinals – Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph over Wheelersburg; Cincinnati North College Hill over Ottawa-Glandorf

Final – Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph over Cincinnati North College Hill

DIVISION IV

Eight of the twelve teams ranked in the final Associated Press Poll have qualified for the regional tournament. Six teams (Van Buren, Canal Winchester Harvest Prep, Lockland, New Knoxville, Houston, Windham) were regional qualifiers in D4 in 2007. Houston also advanced to the regional in 2006. This is a fourth straight trip to the regional tournament for Lockland and the fifth consecutive trip for Windham. Oak Hill was a regional qualifier in D3 in 2007. Undefeated teams in D4 are New Knoxville and Malvern.

REGIONAL

FAIRGROUNDS COLISEUM: #3 Worthington Christian, #5 Canal Winchester Harvest Prep, and #9 Oak Hill are ranked teams at the barn. Worthington Christian and 2007 D4 state runner-up Canal Winchester each have only one loss with the losses coming to D2 Columbus St. Francis DeSales. Harvest Prep's top player from a year ago, Ray Nelson, transferred and is now playing at Canal Winchester. Top players include Brian Hecker (Worthington Christian),

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Dane Givner (Harvest Prep), 6'9" D.J. Cunningham (Waterford), and Kyle Ondera (Oak Hill).

Semifinals – Worthington Christian over Waterford; Canal Winchester Harvest Prep over Oak Hill

Final – Worthington Christian over Canal Winchester Harvest Prep

CANTON FIELDHOUSE: #2 Malvern is the only ranked team at Canton. Undefeated Malvern has three career 1,000-point scorers in seniors Zak Kapron and Trevor Halter and junior Tyler Tucci. Only two teams have come within ten points of Malvern this season. Windham's Marty Hill earned career win #500 earlier in the season. In addition to the Malvern trio, top players include Joc Blinsky (Columbiana), Phil Workman (Windham), and Lamar McKnight (Bedford St. Peter Chanel)

Semifinals – Malvern over Columbiana; Bedford St. Peter Chanel over Windham

Final – Malvern over Bedford St. Peter Chanel

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: #10 Ayersville is the only ranked team at Anderson Arena. Van Buren defeated #12 Toledo Christian in overtime in a district final. Ayersville won the Green Meadows Conference with Wayne Trace finishing in a tie for second. Ayersville's only losses were to Fort Jennings and Kalida. Long-time Wayne Trace coach Al Welch will be retiring at the end of the season with over 500 wins. The Raiders won the 1991 D3 state championship under Welch. Van Buren was the regional runner-up in 2007. Top players include Matt Phillips (Van Buren) and sophomore Brook Turson (Plymouth).

Semifinals – Van Buren over Plymouth; Wayne Trace over Ayersville

Final – Wayne Trace over Van Buren

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON: #1 New Knoxville, #4 Lockland, and #11 Cincinnati Seven Hills are ranked teams at the UD Arena. Only one team has come within ten points of New Knoxville. Tony Meyer is the top player for the Rangers who feature four players averaging in double figures. Lockland lost 83-59 to Dayton Jefferson in a district final, but Jefferson was forced to forfeit the game for using an ineligible player. Cincinnati Seven Hills' only loss is to North College Hill while Lockland's only regular season loss was to Seven Hills.

Semifinals – New Knoxville over Houston; Cincinnati Seven Hills over Lockland

Final – New Knoxville over Cincinnati Seven Hills

STATE

Division IV semi-final games will be played on Thursday evening with the championship game the early Saturday afternoon game.

Final Four – Worthington Christian, Malvern, Wayne Trace, New Knoxville

Semifinals – Malvern over Worthington Christian; New Knoxville over Wayne Trace

Final – New Knoxville over Malvern

That is Trail Trash for another year. Try not to take some of those predictions too seriously. We appreciate your continued support and value your feedback. The opinions expressed in Trail Trash are those of the Swami. Contact davey1@davey1.com if you have any opinions, comments, or corrections. See you in Columbus if not sooner.

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