

Trail Trash

**for the 2001 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament**

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



The Swami's numbers for the first edition of the 2001 Trail Trash were not quite up to his 2000 level, but he still managed to break the one hundred win barrier with a 101-47 (68%) win/loss record. That included just six district winners. Losing a couple of projected winners (Libbey and Patrick Henry) in sectional semifinal games did not help.

Despite his modest successes, the Swami is more than ready for the stretch run. His renewed energy is probably from all those radiation injections that the plate in his head took in walking through the metal detectors at the Springfield sectional and district semi-finals. The Swami does not know if such measures are becoming the norm around the state, but he does know that Springfield was the only location in NW Ohio to employ this inconvenience. We live in dangerous times, but it is extremely offensive to be herded through these contraptions. Let us hope that the authorities at Springfield found a great

deal of contraband to justify the efforts. It was obvious that it failed to detect any large plastic dog bones.

To continue this rant, the Swami also found it unfortunate that the Eastwood fans had to choose between watching their girl's team play in the regional and the boy's team in the district on the same night. Granted they play in different divisions, but you just wonder whether the boy's game could have been moved back a day. Thank you OHSAA for your infinite wisdom.

The Swami would like to thank all those who have been complimentary of Trail Trash. Pounding this out on a Sunday afternoon with the sun shining might not be a day at the beach, but all the comments make it worthwhile.

No more complaining. Let's get it on. It's Swami time.

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DIVISION I

Six of the seventeen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have reached the regional led by top ranked Columbus Brookhaven. Only three teams (Brookhaven, Cleveland St. Ignatius, Cincinnati Elder) make a return trip to the regional in 2001. We will also see an all-new final four this year. Vandalia Butler knocked off defending big school champ Cincinnati St. Xavier in a district final.

REGIONAL

The regional originally scheduled for the University of Toledo has now been split between Cleveland State and Toledo for travel reasons. The semi-final between Ignatius and Strongsville will be played at CSU with the Ashland-Lima Senior game scheduled for UT. A tough break for Toledo area fans but really a no-brainer.

Columbus Fairgrounds: #1 Columbus Brookhaven, #14 Dublin Coffman, and #15 Zanesville are joined by Thomas Worthington to make up a strong field. Is there some other place where this regional could be played? The Fairgrounds Coliseum remains a dump. Zanesville is at a disadvantage given that the other three played their sectional and district games in these strange surroundings. The Blue Devils knocked off #9 East Liverpool in a district semi-final. Coffman is led by one of the best juniors in the state in guard Chris Quinn. Take DC over Zanesville, the 1995 D1 champ. In J.J. Sullinger, Worthington has probably the best senior in Ohio. Take Brookhaven in a close game. In the final, the Swami likes the Brookhaven Bearcats over Coffman

Xavier University: No ranked teams here, but do not underestimate this regional. The last two D1 state champs have come from the southwest. First time for tournament play at the brand new Cintas Center. Elder defeated #11 Moeller in a district final. Elder also knocked then-undefeated St. Ignatius from the top of the AP poll back in February. Got to go with Elder over Springfield South. Vandalia Butler has one of the biggest teams in the state while Western Hills has a big man of their own in Danny Horace. It is believed that this is the first time that Western Hills has reached the regional. Vandalia beat #8 St.

Xavier in a district final while Western Hills knocked off #2 Cincinnati Winton Woods in the district. Take Western Hills over the Aviators. Cincinnati Elder advances to Columbus with a win over Cincinnati Western Hills in the final.

University of Toledo: #5 Cleveland St. Ignatius leads the way. First time since 1988 that a Toledo City League team has not reached the regional. Iggy was undefeated until they met Elder in Cincinnati. Wildcats also had a late season loss to Shaker Heights. Many expected Lakewood St. Edward and Jawad Williams to match up with Ignatius for a third time at CSU. That will not happen as Strongsville nipped the Eagles. Take Iggy over the Mustangs. At UT, Lima Senior and Ashland present contrasting styles. Ashland easily handled #6 Toledo St. John's to reach the regional. Lima, a winner in their district semi-final by 78, got revenge over #17 Toledo Scott in a district final. Take Lima Senior although this will be no cakewalk. In the final at Savage Hall, look for St. Ignatius to move on to the final four with a close win over Lima.

University of Akron: #12 Mentor and #16 Massillon Jackson are ranked at the JAR. Talk about contrasting styles, Mentor has been over eighty points in each of their tournament games while Jackson has given up an average of twenty-seven in their tournament games. 1997 state champ Cleveland Heights has as many losses as anyone surviving in D1, but the Tigers have been hot of late with ten consecutive wins. Heights knocked #13 Warren Harding out of the tournament while Stow has a district win over #10 Akron Central-Hower. Take Mentor over Stow and Massillon Jackson over Cleveland Heights in semi-final games. In the finals, Jackson advances to the state tournament by defeating the Mentor Cardinals.

STATE

The final four consists of Columbus Brookhaven, Cincinnati Elder, Cleveland St. Ignatius, and Massillon Jackson. This is the first trip to the state for Brookhaven. Elder has three state championships to their credit, the most recent in 1993. Jackson's only previous appearance came in 1994 with Jami Bosley leading the way. Ignatius was the runnerup in 1998. Once again, D1 will close out the tournament on Saturday night. In Friday night action, Elder upsets Brookhaven. The Elder fans will be as obnoxious as ever. In the other semi, Iggy slips past Jackson. In the final, Cleveland St. Ignatius revenges the February loss in Cincinnati

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and wins their initial state crown by edging Elder. Not since Cleveland Heights in 1997 has a public school won the D1 crown.

DIVISION II

Six of the fifteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll will play in the regional. Top-ranked Wooster Triway was dumped in a district semi-final by Canton South. Four teams (defending state champ Warrensville Heights, Cincinnati Purcell Marian, Cambridge, and Willard) return to the regional in 2001. All of those teams except Willard made it to the final four in 2000.

REGIONAL

The regional originally scheduled for Bowling Green has also been split for travel reasons. Willard and Ottawa-Glandorf will meet at BGSU in one semi-final while Olmsted Falls and undefeated Tallmadge will meet in the first game of a doubleheader (Strongsville-Ignatius in the nightcap) at CSU's Convocation Center. The final will be played at BG's Anderson Arena.

Wright State University: #4 Kettering Alter is the only ranked team at the Nutter Center. Keith Jackson leads 2000 state runner-up Purcell Marian while Adam Waleskowski leads Alter, the 1999 state champs. Alter won its district final by easily defeating Dayton Christian, a school currently under fire from the Dayton Daily News for allegedly recruiting foreign players. Got to go with Alter over Purcell Marian. Given their tough schedule, Roger Bacon's seven losses are deceiving while Mifflin comes out of a weak Columbus district. Take Cincinnati Roger Bacon over the Punchers. The Swami would like to see some new blood in Columbus, but it will not happen here. Alter defeats Roger Bacon to advance.

Ohio University: #14 Cambridge is the only ranked team at the Convo. Columbus East defeated #8 Columbus DeSales in the district. Take Columbus East over Dover in the first game. Big Adam Davenport and little Brandon Todd lead Cambridge into battle. Portsmouth, the 1988 state champ, has a district win over #7 Washington Court House. Look for Cambridge's tournament experience to lead the

Bobcats over Portsmouth. The Swami really struggled on that one. In the final, Cambridge defeats Columbus East to advance to the state tournament. Looks like we will have to put up with all the Gene Ford stories once again. The Swami hopes not.

Bowling Green State University: #2 Willard, #3 Tallmadge, and #5 Ottawa-Glandorf are joined by Olmsted Falls. What a great regional. Only six losses among the four teams. Too bad fans will not be able to see all the games given the split sites. Tallmadge is undefeated while Willard and Ottawa-Glandorf have one loss each. Willard lost its regular season finale to Shelby while Ottawa-Glandorf lost in mid-season to Celina. Olmsted Falls, the Division II state football champ, is led by St. Bonaventure recruit Mike Gansey. The Bulldogs knocked off #14 Avon Lake in a district final. Tallmadge is coached by Jack Greynolds, Jr. Greynolds' father coached the undefeated Barberton Magics (led by the Bodnar twins and Carter Scott) to a state crown in 1976. At CSU, look for Tallmadge to remain undefeated with a win over Olmsted Falls. At BGSU, O-G and Willard is too close to call. The Titans edge the Crimson Flashes despite the efforts of Willard's sensational sophomore, Nick Dials. In the final at BGSU, Ottawa-Glandorf's depth ends Tallmadge's undefeated season. The Titans advance to Columbus.

Canton Civic Center: #6 Warrensville Heights is the only ranked team at Canton. Warrensville defeated #13 University School and Cortland Lakeview defeated #12 Painesville Harvey in district finals. Canton South defeated #1 Triway in the district. Juby Johnson might have graduated, but Warrensville is still loaded. Brian Swift who led Bedford Chanel to the 1999 D3 state crown transferred in to join two returning starters and Juby's sophomore brother Meche (where did they find these names?) in leading the Tigers. Take Warrensville over Youngstown Chaney. In the other semi-final, Canton South defeats Cortland Lakeview. In the finals, Warrensville Heights earns a return trip to Columbus with a win over Canton South

STATE

Kettering Alter, Cambridge, Ottawa-Glandorf, and Warrensville Heights make up the final four. Alter was the 1999 champ and Warrensville the 2000 champ with Cambridge and Ottawa-Glandorf making their respective sixth and fourth trips to the

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state. Alter opens play by nipping Cambridge, once again foiling Gene Ford's bid for a state crown. In the other semi-final, Ottawa hangs on to knock Warrensville Heights out of the tournament much to the bewilderment of Warrensville Heights coach Dennis "Mo" Chimes. In the final, another state championship for Kettering Alter with a win over Ottawa-Glandorf.

DIVISION III

The Division III state tournament for 2001 has been cancelled since no team can possibly defeat Akron St. Vincent-St. Marys. Love them or hate them, the Irish have created a major buzz and put fannies in the seats.

Half of the sixteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll have reached regional play. This includes the top five. Only three teams (Akron SVSM, Cleveland VASJ, and Canal Winchester) make a return trip to the regional in 2001. SVSM and Canal Winchester return from the 2000 final four.

REGIONAL

Ohio University: #3 Morral Ridgedale, #5 Chesapeake, and #14 Belpre are joined by Newcomerstown at the Convo. Belpre defeated #8 Wheelersburg in a district final while Newcomerstown upset #15 Shenandoah in their regional final. Both Chesapeake and Belpre played in districts at Ohio University. Ridgedale (located north of Marion) makes the long trip to Athens for a great matchup with Chesapeake (across the river from Huntington, West Virginia for geography majors). The long bus ride turns out to be a factor as Chesapeake edges Ridgedale. In the other semi, take Belpre over Woody's hometown. Belpre advances to the state tournament as they "upset" Chesapeake.

Wright State University: #9 Miami East is the only ranked team at the Nutter Center. Wasn't Miami East involved in the infamous Jim Marquette/Seaman North Adams fiasco? Can the Swami just move on from that? Middletown Fenwick faces Waynesville in the opener. Go with Fenwick. Miami East and Canal Winchester square off in the second game. The winner should be in position to

take the regional crown. Miami East over CW. In the championship game, Miami East advances to Columbus as they thump Middletown Fenwick.

Bowling Green State University: #2 Liberty-Benton and #7 Wayne Trace are ranked teams playing at BGSU. Two weeks ago, the Swami would have looked at this as an outstanding regional. That was before undefeated Liberty-Benton lost leading scorer Brady Hoane to a separated shoulder and Wynford defeated #11 Ontario in a district final. This is still a very solid regional with undefeated L-B, once-beaten Wayne Trace (by Van Wert), and solid clubs in Wynford and Oberlin. Following two regular season losses, Wynford gained revenge over Ontario on a last second shot. Meanwhile, Liberty-Benton was able to get through their district without Hoane. You have to admire L-B's tenacity. Take the Eagles over Wynford in a very close contest. Haviland Wayne Trace, the 1991 state champ, will prove to be much too strong for Oberlin. In the final before a packed house, Wayne Trace advances with a win over L-B.

Canton Fieldhouse: #1 Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary and #4 Jeromesville Hillsdale are ranked teams at Canton. The Irish have only a loss to Oak Hill Academy marring their record. Coached by Keith Dambrot, SVSM is led by the state's best player in soph LeBron James. Add in Aly Samabaly, tiny Dru Joyce, and a bunch of other talented players and it is easy to see why the Irish are considered the best team in the state regardless of class. SVSM defeated #13 New Middletown Springfield handily in a district final. Undefeated Hillsdale is led by Joey Brightbill. The Falcons have struggled in the tournament but have found a way to advance. SVSM wins easily. In the other game, 1993 D2 champ Girard faces traditional power Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph. VASJ finished the regular season under .500. The Vikings edge Girard. SVSM already owns an easy regular season win over VASJ. Look for more of the same in the regional final. St. Vincent-St. Mary's to the state.

STATE

Belpre, Miami East, Wayne Trace, and Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary's make up the final four. All four teams have made previous trips to Columbus. SVSM is the defending champion while Miami East was the 1996 D3 champ. Look for games #2 and #9 to be the tournament's toughest tickets. Belpre and Miami East start off the Seventy-Ninth Boys State Basketball Tournament on Thursday morning. Miami East edges Belpre. In the second

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game, SVSM and Wayne Trace face off. If SVSM is to lose, this will be the game. That does not happen as Irish defeat Wayne Trace. In the final, SVSM easily defeats Miami East for their second consecutive state crown.

DIVISION IV

Six of the seventeen teams ranked in the final Associated Press poll enter regional play. Just two teams (Tipp City Bethel and Worthington Christian) return to the regional in 2001 with Worthington Christian the only 2000 final four team still alive. Worthington Christian was also the 1999 state champion. 2000 state champ Fort Jennings was eliminated by Delphos St. John's in a district final.

REGIONAL

University of Toledo: #14 Delphos St. John's and #14 Holgate head this field. Not as deep and balanced as in previous years. Delphos owns a win over the state's top-ranked team, Marion Local. The Blue Jays non-league schedule includes a number of D1 and D2 teams. In the opener, DSJ defeats Holgate. McComb is able to hang on to defeat the Old Fort Stockaders in the other semi-final. Delphos and McComb both went undefeated in football during the regular season. Delphos annihilated McComb in the playoffs. Not as bad this time, but look for Delphos St. John's to advance to the state tournament with a win over McComb.

Canton Fieldhouse: No teams are ranked in this regional. The Swami is having a very difficult time getting inspired by this group. In the first game, go with East Canton over Cleveland Heights Lutheran East. In the second game, Strasburg-Franklin defeats Mogadore. Strasburg-Franklin advances to the state tournament with a win over East Canton in the final. This regional will not be the same with the tragic loss of Perry Reese.

Miami University: #1 Marion Local and #11 Tipp City Bethel head this field. Despite having only two ranked teams, this is an excellent regional. Marion defeated #9 Minster, Bethel defeated #7 Cincinnati Country Day, and Covington edged #6 Cedarville in district finals. With Cory Eyink back,

Marion Local appears to be clicking. Marion defeats Botkins in a close game. Bethel handily defeated Covington during the regular season. This one will be much closer, but Bethel will win again. In the final, Marion Local advances to the state tournament with a win over Tipp City Bethel.

Fairgrounds Coliseum: #8 Worthington Christian and #10 Reedsville Eastern lead this field. No reason to go into another tirade about the Fairgrounds Coliseum. Worthington Christian easily defeated #3 Lancaster Fisher Catholic in a district final. Long-time coach Ray Slagle left WC after the 2000 season with former Warriors player Kevin Weakley replacing him. WC has hardly missed a beat in a rebuilding season. Mansfield St. Peter is led by a standout freshman in guard Marcus Butler. Worthington Christian defeats Mansfield St. Peter in the first game. In the second game Reedsville Eastern defeats Willow Wood Symmes Valley. If anyone has an idea where those two schools are, please e-mail Trail Trash immediately. In the final Worthington Christian advances by defeating Reedsville Eastern.

STATE

Delphos St. John's, Strasburg-Franklin, Maria Stein Marion Local, and Worthington Christian make up the final four. All have made multiple trips to the state tournament and are former state champs. Delphos leads the way with ten trips to the state including the Class A championship in 1983. Strasburg was the state champion in Class A in their most recent trip to the state in 1967 when Charlie Huggins coached the Tigers. DSJ defeats Strasburg-Franklin in one semi-final. Marion Local moves past Worthington Christian in the other game. The final involves two teams from the powerful Midwestern Athletic Conference. Marion Local avenges a regular season defeat by Delphos St. John's. Marion Local is the D4 state champ for 2001.

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

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