

Trail Trash

for the 2004 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



Seems hard to believe but it is time for the eleventh annual edition of Trail Trash, featuring the expert opinions and predictions of the Swami. For many readers, the highlight of the long winter is the day their Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue Trail Trash hits the mailbox. Trail Trash is your bible for Northwest Ohio basketball tournament information. We are proud to announce that Trail Trash is now on the Internet at davey1.com.

The Swami would like to congratulate the NW Ohio District Board for adopting the new seeding process. Under the new system, all teams at a sectional are seeded rather than only two teams being seeded. The top seed has the first choice to place themselves on the bracket followed by the second seed, the third seed, etc. Any team may choose to pass with the only requirement being that the top two seeds cannot place themselves on the same bracket. This system rewards teams that have had good seasons even if they do not receive one of the top two seeds. Some of the draws were very interesting with third seeds jumping on

the same bracket as the first seed. The Swami would have liked to have seen the seeding and placement of teams on the brackets play itself out at the Liberty-Benton D1 and Findlay D3 sectionals.

The Swami was very respectable in last year's second edition (regional and state tournament) getting all four champions into the state tournament and six of the eight teams into the championship games. The overall record was 43-17 (72%) with two state champs.

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for Trail Trash, contact davey1@davey1.com. The Swami can also be contacted through swamisig@aol.com. The Swami has his mojo going. Time to fire up the ouija board. Let's roll, it's Swami time.



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The '03-'04 season in D1 has been viewed as mediocre by some experts. Toledo St. John's received the majority of the pre-season hype but stumbled early when Zach Hillesland hurt a knee. However, the

DIVISION I

Titans have been dynamite in the short time since Hillesland returned. Toledo Libbey has early season victories over St. John's and Columbus Brookhaven, but the Cowboys have had some problems on the road and with lesser foes. Lima Senior has been solid playing a grueling non-league schedule offset by their league play in a mediocre Greater Buckeye Conference. Mansfield Senior so far has had a solid but somewhat inconsistent season. An additional thirteen D1 squads were above .500 at the time of the draw with Sylvania Southview, Celina, Bowling Green, and Perrysburg appearing to be the frontrunners. That should make for some solid tournament games in this "mediocre" season. District semi-final games for the Willard and Liberty-Benton sectional winners will be played at those sites with the district final to be played at BG. Winners from the two Toledo sectionals will advance to UT's Savage Hall with the Waite winners meeting in one semi-final and the Libbey winners in the other. The two D1 district champs from NW Ohio will advance to UT with the BG winner playing the Grafton district winner (Lakewood St. Edward, Olmsted Falls, Elyria, and Lorain Southview are the top contenders) while the UT district winner will meet the Berea district champs (wide open with St. Ignatius, Cleveland Rhodes, Midpark, Strongsville, North Royalton, and Solon all with a shot)

SECTIONALS

Willard: Mansfield Senior and Sandusky are the top seeds. Mansfield has put together a solid but unspectacular season. Jon Avery and Yima Chia-Kur lead the Tygers. Ryan Williams paces Sandusky. TJ James has replaced John Schlessman as the Streaks' head coach this season. Sandusky is undefeated against the teams in this sectional including a win over Mansfield Senior during December. Ashland took the district crown in '03, but the Arrows lost everyone to graduation. Fremont Ross has struggled through a rebuilding year. Take Ashland over Madison, Marion Harding over Tiffin Columbian, and Sandusky over Ross in the first round. Rivals Mansfield and Ashland have already played twice with the Tygers easily winning against Ashland's stall and nipping the Arrows at Mansfield. The Swami likes Mansfield over Ashland and Sandusky over Harding in the finals.

Liberty-Benton: Lima Senior and Celina are the top seeds. Excellent sectional at L-B. Lima Senior is led by an outstanding junior in Travis Walton. Celina recently fell out of the WBL race and is back in D1 after a season in D2. The Bulldogs have an outstanding scorer in Tim Homan. BG and Perrysburg are in the hunt for the NLL crown along with Sylvania Southview. Coach Von Graffin's team has overcome several injuries with the coach's son, Michael, the team's leading scorer. Mike Dhondt is the big gun for Pburg. The Jackets can be very strong when they get the ball to big man Ryan Winkleman. Findlay is having a solid season in what was thought to be a rebuilding year, but the Trojans must shoot the "3" extremely well to compete with the better teams. Anthony Wayne has wins over both BG and Pburg. Maumee lost their leading scorer, sophomore Chris Poellnitz, to grades at the end of the semester. BG

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and Celina is an intriguing matchup as the #2 and #3 seeds face off in the first round. The Swami isn't sure why the Bobcats did not get the #2 seed, but they will knock off Celina. Take Perrysburg over Maumee and Findlay to edge past AW in the first round. In the finals, go with Lima Senior over Pburg and BG over Findlay.

Toledo Waite: Toledo St. John's and Toledo St. Francis are the top seeds. It just wouldn't be tournament time without the Waite Fieldhouse. St. John's is led by the "big three" of Brian Roberts (headed to the University of Dayton), B.J. Raymond, and Zach Hillesland. St. John's did not impress while Hillesland was out, but it appears the Titans can go a long way now that the "big three" is intact. St. Francis has been somewhat of a surprise and has an outstanding guard in C.J. Johnson. Scott has a quality win against Lima Senior, but the Bulldogs were absolutely destroyed by St. John's, Canton McKinley, and Libbey. Big Earl Morris is feeling the heat from the Scott community and his status beyond this season is in doubt. Central has quietly put together a decent rebuilding season under new coach Paul Patterson. Northview has fallen off the pace for the NLL crown while Rogers probably would have a few more wins if leading scorer Fred Davis had not left school in January to get a head start on his football career at USC. Take Scott over Rogers, St. Francis over Central, St. John's over Woodward, and Northview over Springfield. Scott "upsets" St. Francis in one final while St. John's wins big over Northview. Please note that sites and times for the March 5 finals are up in the air since Libbey drew into the Libbey site.

Toledo Libbey: Toledo Libbey and Sylvania Southview are the top seeds. An evening at Libbey is always exciting. Not much parking and you never know if your car will still be around after the game. Libbey started strong with wins over St. John's and Brookhaven. The Cowboys suffered tough losses at Dublin Scioto and Lima Senior, got waxed at Akron SVSM, and were upset at home by Clay. Libbey is a deep, talented team led by guard Pete Pierce. A serious knee injury to inside player David Osby could have an impact. Southview currently leads the NLL. The Cougars are also talented but extremely inconsistent. Steve Kyser and Ray Thomas lead Southview. Clay and Whitmer have been very competitive in their first year in the Toledo City League with both coming on strong in the second half of the season. Waite has been respectable but appears to have lost leading scorer Mike Lucas to a knee injury. Bowsher started the season 3-0 but haven't won since. Take the Rebels over Start. Southview will avenge a regular season loss to Waite while Whitmer will nip Clay in overtime. Take Libbey easily over Bowsher and Southview over Whitmer in the finals. Southview and Whitmer has all the makings of an upset, but the Swami has to go with the Cougars.

(Continued after Division I Brackets)

Please note again that the site and times for the March 5 finals have not been determined. Libbey's game will be moved to Waite. The status of the other final will probably depend on whether Waite advances.

DISTRICTS

Mansfield and Sandusky will meet in a district semi-final at Willard while Lima Senior will face off against BG in a semi-final at Liberty-Benton. Look for Mansfield to avenge their regular season loss to Sandusky. Take Lima Senior over BG. This will be nothing like the 2001 debacle, but you have to go with the Spartans.

BGSU: Lima Senior and Mansfield Senior have had some great tournament battles over the years including a classic at UT in 2000. There are a number of similarities between these two clubs. With our publishing schedule, the Swami will need to make a call on this one before the two teams' regular season meeting on February 14 in Lima. Take Lima over Mansfield for the district crown.

University of Toledo: St. John's will have already played nine games at UT by the time the district rolls around. If the Johnnies make it all the way to the regional finals, they will have played thirteen games at this "neutral" site. St. John's will have little trouble with Scott in the opener. The Bulldogs can't matchup size-wise with the Titans, and will live and mostly die by the "3." Take Libbey over Southview in the second game. This could be one of the most entertaining games of the tournament season. In the district final, look for St. John's to win another championship with a win over Libbey on the Titans' real home floor.

DIVISION II

The spotlight has shown brightly on Ottawa-Glandorf this season with only a loss at St. Marys Memorial marring their record to date. The Titans have some close wins, but we do not know where the Associated Press found that second loss. Maybe that is AP's prediction of the February 13 skirmish between O-G and Shawnee at Lima? That battle featuring the Pollitz twins from O-G and Shawnee's Jamar Butler could very well be the preview of the BG district final. The Western Buckeye League has been outstanding at the top this season with O-G, Shawnee, Elida, St. Marys, Van Wert and DI Celina making each other's lives miserable. Shelby, Port Clinton, Wauseon, Fostoria, and Willard have all appeared at some time in the weekly AP poll, but the real power appears to be in the WBL. The sectional originally scheduled for Lima Senior was moved to Ohio Northern due to the construction and limited parking around Lima Senior. The two NW Ohio district winners in D2 advance to an outstanding regional at UT's Savage Hall. The BG winner will meet the Stow winner (# 1 LaGrange Keystone is the favorite but don't be surprised if the "Rock" doesn't make it



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to UT) while the Ashland winner plays the Barberton winner (#2 Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary, #9 Akron Buchtel, # 13 Akron Central-Hower).

SECTIONALS

Ohio Northern: Ottawa-Glandorf and Lima Shawnee are the top seeds. What a sectional. Tim and Eric Pollitz again lead O-G. There is a good chance that Tim Pollitz will not only become O-G's all-time leading scorer during the sectional, but Putnam County's as well. The Titans have been bothered by zone defenses this season, and at least two teams in this sectional (Van Wert and Elida) let games get away at O-G. Shawnee has yet to a sectional championship in Jamar Butler's four seasons. Butler has committed to Ohio State and has scored well over 2,000 points in his career. This season he is averaging 30.7 points and 8.2 assists per outing. As of February 12, the Indians are undefeated in the WBL. Elida has been outstanding in a rebuilding season. After getting the #3 seed at ONU, Elida's Chris Adams jumped onto O-G's bracket. Junior-dominated Van Wert started strong until losing consecutive games to Archbold, O-G, and Shawnee. The O-G and Archbold games were especially painful as the Cougars had great opportunities to win both. St. Marys Memorial is another excellent WBL team. The Roughriders handed O-G their only loss. Elida and St. Marys will be a battle in the first round. The Roughriders have had some injury problems but appear to be getting healthy. Could the Bulldogs be caught looking ahead to O-G? Take Elida over St. Marys. O-G over Lima Bath, Shawnee over Paulding, and Van Wert over Wapak in other first round games. In the finals, take O-G over Elida. The Swami says that Elida had their shot in the regular season game at O-G. This time, the Titans will be ready. Shawnee will defeat Van Wert in the other final. Van Wert played the Indians tough at Shawnee, but it is time for Jamar Butler to get a sectional crown.

Perrysburg: Wauseon and Fostoria are the top seeds. Wauseon expected to be in somewhat of a rebuilding year but won their first twelve before losing at Archbold. The Indians have not played a strong schedule. Junior Jake Reckner has been a huge surprise for Wauseon. Junior Jake Diebler and freshman Jon Diebler lead Fostoria. Jon Diebler threw in 49 at Willard. The Redmen started slowly and were blown out by Port Clinton at Fostoria in early January. The Redmen have not lost since and appear to be on their way to an NOL crown. Defiance is improved under new coach Kirk Lehman. Bryan is led by Chris Carpenter, the Golden Bears' all-time leading scorer. Several years ago, Lehman was run out as head coach

(Continued after Division II Brackets)

at Rossford by an overzealous superintendent who was also a disgruntled parent (talk about a bad combination). Rossford hasn't been the same since. Coach Lehman will meet his old team in a battle of Bulldogs. Take Defiance. Bryan over Eastwood and Fostoria over Napoleon in other first round games. Defiance will give Wauseon a battle in one final, but Wauseon appears to have too much size for the Bulldogs. Fostoria has imploded the last two years in the sectionals against mediocre Napoleon and Rossford teams. The Redmen appear to be more disciplined this year (hard to believe for a Keith Diebler team). Take Fostoria over Bryan in the other final.

Sandusky: Port Clinton and Norwalk are the top seeds. Port Clinton appears to have peaked after their big win at Fostoria. That was the Redskins' ninth consecutive win before PC lost to Margaretta. All-district Andrew Lemmon and 7' Drew Walker (committed to Central Michigan) lead the 'Skins. PC has gotten very little from their other players down the stretch and an injury to Lemmon has not helped matters. Norwalk does not have a senior on the team. The Truckers are very talented but consistency for the junior and sophomore dominated team has been a factor. Stephen Hunter is the Truckers' big gun. Vermilion started strong and had little trouble against PC, but the Sailors have been slumping of late. Former Gibsonburg and Fayette coach Tim Walsh leads Oak Harbor. The Rockets also started strong but have faded. Clyde has an outstanding player in Matt Muratori. It is hard to believe that Bellevue has won only six games over the past two seasons, but the Redmen are very young. Vermilion got the #3 seed and jumped on PC's bracket. Take Vermilion over Bellevue, but the Sailors better not be looking ahead to PC. Norwalk over Perkins and Clyde in an upset of Oak Harbor in other first round games. In the finals, Vermilion edges Port Clinton with Norwalk advancing with a win over Clyde.

Mansfield Madison: Shelby and Willard are the top seeds. Shelby surprised everyone by jumping out at 12-1 including eight straight to start the season. The Whippets have slumped of late and the blow out by Lexington was a shocker. Senior Ben Carver has been outstanding for the Whippets. Despite the loss of Nick Dials to graduation, Willard ran off nine straight to start the season and were ranked #2 by AP. The Flashes then went into a four game skid, but appear to have righted the ship with quality wins at Port Clinton and at Norwalk. Sophomore Jimmy Langhurst leads the Flashes. Ontario has put together a fine season, but the Warriors are only 1-3 against D2 teams. Upper Sandusky returned leading scorer Greg Micheli from last year's district runner-up, but the Rams have been a disappointment. Kenton may be the worst D2 team in the state. Take Ontario over Galion, Willard big over Kenton, and Upper in a squeaker over Lexington in the first round. Shelby and Ontario is almost too close to call. The Whippets have a regular season win over the Warriors. Shelby has been scuffling while Ontario has been winning of late. Take Shelby in one final based on

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their stronger schedule. Willard over Upper in the other final.

DISTRICTS

BGSU: This district has been dominated by the WBL teams for years with Wauseon in '94 as the last winner not from the Western Buckeye league. O-G has the Pollitz twins while Fostoria has the Diebler brothers. O-G appears to have the stronger supporting cast so take the Titans over Fostoria. Shawnee and Wauseon in a battle of Indians in the second game. Shawnee has no trouble advancing past Wauseon. Ottawa-Glandorf has won the BG district the past three seasons with Shawnee being the last team other than the Titans to win at Bowling Green. O-G wins another district crown with a win over Shawnee in a thriller.

Ashland University: Three NOL teams dominate the field at Ashland. In the opener, Willard has little trouble with Vermilion. Norwalk posts a mild upset with a win over Shelby in the other semi-final. Willard starts three sophomores and only one senior while Norwalk starts four juniors and a sophomore. Willard already has defeated Norwalk twice this season and the Flashes take a third win over the Truckers for a district championship. The regional will be a real challenge for the young Flashes.

DIVISION III

This has been a solid year for D3 basketball in NW Ohio despite Liberty-Benton being the only team with a weekly presence in the AP top ten. A real surprise has been the lack of publicity received by Archbold. The Blue Streaks returned three starters from their '03 state qualifier and added transfer Mike Pratt. The Streaks played a number of games without an injured D.J. Selgo, with their only losses on the season to O-G and Wauseon in December. With Selgo back, they recently handed Wauseon their first loss. Margaretta, Woodmore, Western Reserve, and New London have had outstanding seasons while traditional powers Lima Central Catholic, Delphos St. John's, St. Henry, Patrick Henry, Wynford and '02 state champ Clear Fork have been extremely solid. The sectional previously played at Defiance has been moved to Napoleon with the Napoleon district shifting to Ohio Northern as the only site changes. The three NW Ohio D3 district winners advance to the regional at BG's ancient Anderson Arena where they will be joined by the Elyria district winner (Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, Brooklyn, Fairview Park Lutheran West, and Lorain Clearview appear to be the favorites).

(Continued after Division III Brackets)

SECTIONALS:

Elida: St. Henry and Lima Central Catholic are the top seeds. St. Henry is very balanced with four starters averaging between 10.5 and 13 points a game and five players averaging at least four rebounds per outing. The Redskins started off 0-2 but since have lost only to state-ranked Fort Loramie and Versailles. Lima Central Catholic had heavy graduation losses but this is a typical Bob Segerson coached team. The T-Birds are fundamentally sound and play terrific defense. What is different for the 'Birds this season is they finally have their own gym. Pat Stolly leads LCC. Delphos St. John's also suffered heavy graduation losses, but the Jays, as usual, are having a solid season. Coldwater has been a disappointment while Spencerville has had some success despite being dominated by sophomores and freshman. Parkway currently has only one win, but it was against a solid New Bremen club. Take Coldwater over Spencerville and Delphos St. John's over Parkway in the openers. LCC already owns a win over DSJ at Lima. This one will be even closer, but take the T-Birds. St. Henry takes the other final with a win over Coldwater.

Napoleon: Archbold and Tinora are the top seeds. Archbold still has a key NWOAL game left at Patrick Henry, but the Blue Streaks could enter the tournament with a fourteen game winning streak. Dan Borchardt, D.J. Selgo, and Joel Ruffer lead the Streaks. Tinora has a new coach in one-time Elmwood boss Rob Mahnke and a fine post player in Ian Webber. Big things were expected of Liberty Center but returning starters Brennen Flory contracted leukemia and Eric Wymer was lost to a football injury. The Tigers have still had a respectable season. Look out for Wayne Trace. The Raiders started slowly but have been on fire of late. Nathan Overmeyer, an outstanding shooter, has carried Wayne Trace. Take Wayne Trace over Liberty Center in the only first round game. In the finals, the Swami likes Wayne Trace over Tinora and Archbold over Fairview.

Sylvania Northview: Evergreen and Genoa are the top seeds. This is a bad sectional. A young Evergreen team is a middle to lower NWOAL club. The Vikings have cleaned up on a weak, D4 dominated non-league schedule. Genoa has hovered just under .500. Big man Zach Diekman leads the Comets. Lake had a decent start but has experienced problems since the holidays. Delta got off to a very slow start, but has shown some improvement. Swanton may be the worst D3 team in the state. The Bulldogs' problems are not surprising since there were questions whether Swanton would even have winter sports given their financial crisis. Take Lake over Delta in the only first round game. In the finals, take Genoa over Lake and Evergreen over Swanton.

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Findlay: Liberty-Benton and Patrick Henry are the top seeds. A very good sectional. Liberty-Benton was the state's top ranked D3 team in the initial AP poll. L-B's only losses have been to undefeated Arlington and Ottoville on the road. Patrick Henry started off strong with five in a row followed by a three game losing streak to Woodmore, L-B, and O-G. The Patriots then ran off six in a before a recent loss at Elmwood. Fortunately for Patrick Henry, Elmwood did not end up in their bracket. Trent Meyer is PH's top player. Otsego and Elmwood have been chasing Woodmore in the SLL race. The Knights and Royals will meet during the final weekend of the regular season. This will be the first game in Elmwood's new gym. Damien Montelongo leads Otsego in scoring. Take Elmwood over Lakota and Otsego over Bluffton in first round games. Both SLL squads have excellent chances to pull off upsets in the finals. The Swami takes Liberty-Benton over Elmwood and Patrick Henry over Otsego in the championship games but don't be surprised if there is an upset.

Norwalk: Western Reserve and Margaretta are the top seeds. Another excellent sectional. Western Reserve is located near Wakeman in Northeast Huron County. Chris Sheldon, son of the retired long time Wynford coach Rob Sheldon, coaches WR. The Roughriders have an outstanding point guard in Shawn Shriver. WR lost to Margaretta by ten in their opener but has won fifteen straight since. WR has handed New London their only two losses. Margaretta is big and talented. The Polar Bears have an excellent player in Jake Meisler. The Bears after early losses to Sandusky St. Marys and Danbury are on a ten game winning streak. Woodmore currently stands atop the SLL. The Wildcats started the season off with losses to Port Clinton and Liberty-Benton on the road, but are currently enjoying an eight game winning streak. Junior Tyler Rosenberger is an outstanding player. Woodmore received the #3 seed and jumped on Western Reserve's bracket.



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Huron has had a number of close losses and played Margaretta close in two games. Gibsonburg has a win over state-ranked D4 Danbury. Take Woodmore over Edison and Huron over Gibsonburg in opening games. The Swami likes Woodmore over Western Reserve and Margaretta over Huron in the finals.

Galion: New London and Wynford are the top seeds. New London has two losses to Western Reserve. In Eric Marschall, the Wildcats have an outstanding post player. At Wynford, long-time assistant Tim Ehresman replaced the retired Rob Sheldon. The Royals have not skipped a beat and continue to win with defense and fundamentals. Wynford is currently on a seven game winning streak. '02 state champ Clear Fork has lost four games by a total of six points to West Holmes,

Loundonville, and Ontario. Connor Gregg is the Colts' top player. CF received the #3 seed and went directly to the championship game against top seed New London. In the only first round game, take Bucyrus over Ashland Crestview. The Swami likes Wynford over Bucyrus and Clear Fork over New London in the finals.

DISTRICTS

Ohio Northern: The same four teams as a year ago in this district. Top seeds St. Henry and Archbold face off in one semi-final. The Swami likes Archbold's tournament experience. Take the Archbold over the Redskins, but it will not be easy. In the nightcap, look for Lima Central Catholic to barely get by Wayne Trace. In the final, Archbold defends their district crown with a win over Lima Central Catholic.

Toledo Waite: Genoa plays Patrick Henry in the opener. The Swami will be very surprised if either of the Northview winners put up much resistance. The Patriots easily defeat the Comets. Evergreen is matched up against Liberty-Benton in the second game. This is another hummer as the Eagles have no problems with the Vikes. Liberty-Benton and Patrick Henry met back in January with L-B taking a win. Same result this time as L-B eliminates PH for the district championship.

Ontario: This appears to be the most interesting D3 district. Clear Fork eliminated Woodmore in the district on their march to the state championship back in '02. Take Clear Fork over Don Christie's Wildcats in a real battle. Wynford has a rich tournament history while Margaretta has never won a district championship. Take the Polar Bears over Wynford. A key will be the play of Margaretta's freshman point guard. Clear Fork and Margaretta appear to be very evenly matched. The Swami has gone back and forth several times on this one. Take Clear Fork barely in the championship game.

DIVISION IV

Every year we mention in Trail Trash that the best D4 basketball in the state is played in NW Ohio. 2003 proved the Swami correct once again as Marion Local defeated Convoy Crestview for the state crown. Forget about the Sebring McKinley's, the Berlin Hiland's, and the Columbus Tree's of Life (did you really expect me to call them the Columbus Tree of Life's?) that you see near the top of the state poll, 2004 is no exception. Arlington and Buckeye Central are at the top of the most recent poll. Arlington does not have a history as a basketball powerhouse and has been much more of a football school. The Red Devils are currently the only undefeated team in NW Ohio (all classes) and are the only undefeated D4 school in the state. Buckeye Central spent some time as the state's top team this season ascending to the top spot the week after losing their first game of the season. Throw in Mansfield St. Peter, Danbury, Convoy Crestview, Holgate, Minster, Pettisville, Van Buren, New Bremen,

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and Fort Jennings and you get the message. Sylvania Southview has replaced Springfield and Riverdale has replaced Fostoria as sectional sites. The district formerly played at Galion has been moved to Willard while the district played last year at Findlay returns to Fostoria. District winners from Elida, Liberty-Benton, Napoleon, and Fostoria will advance to the regional at BG's Anderson Arena. The Wapakoneta district winner advances to the Miami University regional while the Willard district winner gets the privilege of playing at the Columbus Fairgrounds regional.

SECTIONALS

Coldwater: Minster and New Bremen are the top seeds. This site again features five teams from the MAC. At the beginning of the season, some of the experts had Minster rated as one of the top three D4 teams in the state along with Fort Loramie and Convoy Crestview. The Wildcats got off to a slow start by losing big at Spencerville, but they have held their own against a strong schedule. Dane Sommer is Minster's top player. New Bremen has been a surprise especially after losing their point guard in the opener. The Cardinals have quality wins against St. Marys, Delphos, and Marion. However, NB has struggled of late. Scott Schmiesing is Bremen's top player. Marion Local lost all five starters and a key sub from their state championship team of a year ago and got their usual late start due to the football playoffs. Cory Luebke is Marion's top player. Take New Knoxville over Waynesfield-Goshen and Marion Local over Fort Recovery in opening games. In the finals, the Swami likes Minster over New Knoxville and Marion over New Bremen.

Waynesfield-Goshen: Upper Scioto Valley and Hardin-Northern are the top seeds. This sectional has been traditionally dominated in the district by the MAC teams. Lima Perry made it to the district final a year ago before being eliminated by Marion Local. A mediocre sectional this year with Upper Scioto and Hardin-Northern the top teams. Both are above .500, but neither is a contender in their respective conferences. Take Ada over Ridgemont and Allen East over Perry in the first round. In the finals, go with USV over Ada and Hardin-Northern over Allen East in the finals. The Swami still hasn't found Waynesfield-Goshen.

Van Wert: Convoy Crestview and Fort Jennings are the top seeds. The names may change, but this sectional has produced a regional champ the past four seasons. Much was expected out of Crestview after last year's state runner-up finish. The Knights returned three starters in Scott DeLong, Evan Purmort, and Travis Adams along with their key subs.

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Crestview started fast, faded around the holidays, and is currently on an eight game winning streak. '00 D4 state champ Fort Jennings currently leads the PCL. Ryan Schroeder and Kevin Bullinger are the Musketeers' top players. '97 D4 state champ Lincolnview also is in the midst of a fine season. The Lancers are chasing Crestview for the NWC crown. Nick Missler is the leading scorer for the Lancers. Ottoville has a win over Liberty-Benton and is still in the fight for the PCL championship. Traditional power Kalida has slumped since mid-January while Delphos Jefferson is putting together a late season run. Jefferson's Dustin Looser recently became the Wildcats' all-time leading scorer. Take Lincolnview over Kalida and Ottoville over Delphos Jefferson in the first round. Lincolnview defeated Fort Jennings in overtime in early January. The Swami looks for Jennings to avenge that defeat and for Crestview to win over Ottoville in the finals.

Lima Bath: Arlington and Columbus Grove are the top seeds. Undefeated Arlington has quality wins over Fort Jennings, Van Buren, and Liberty-Benton. Given their schedule for the remainder of the season, there is no reason to believe they will not be undefeated when they enter tournament play. The Alexander twins (Matt and Joe) along with Dan Beach are the main cogs for the Red Devils. Columbus Grove has put together a solid season following their state football championship. Cory-Rawson has been right around the .500 mark all season and has a fine player in Daniel Dray. Take Riverdale over Lima Temple Christian and Cory-Rawson over Pandora Gilboa in the first round. The Swami likes Arlington over Riverdale and Cory-Rawson in an upset over Columbus Grove in the finals.

Ottawa-Glandorf: Van Buren and Continental are the top seeds. Last year, unseeded Van Buren and Leipsic advanced out of O-G. Van Buren went all the way to the regional championship before Crestview eliminated them. The Black Knights returned three starters from that team including Blake Tucker and Marty Baird. Continental had big hopes last year but were one and done. The Pirates have surprised this year. Kurtis Brown is an outstanding guard for Continental. North Baltimore is currently enjoying a seven game winning streak. The Tigers are still in contention in the MAL. Take Leipsic over McComb and North Baltimore over Miller City in the first round. Leipsic is in much the same position as they were a year ago. Continental nips the Vikings in one final. Van Buren already has a win over North Baltimore. NB is much improved, but Van Buren prevails in the other final.

Sylvania Southview: Ottawa Hills and Cardinal Stritch are the top seeds. The TAAC(y) sectional at a new site. Ottawa Hills has lost only to Maumee Valley and Pettisville on the road. The Green Bears handed Danbury their first loss and boast a fine post player in Chris Wilson. Cardinal Stritch has been a surprise but the Cardinals are not ready to compete with TAAC powers Danbury and Ottawa Hills. Andrew Boggs has gone over the 1,000-point mark at Toledo Christian. Maumee Valley has been

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inconsistent, but the Hawks have the TAAC's leading scorer in junior Craig Choka. Monclova Christian is in their second year as an OHSAA member. Monclova has nineteen boys in the school with twelve playing basketball. They have four wins so far this year against other OHSAA members. Take Monclova Christian over Northwood and Toledo Christian over Maumee Valley in the first round. The Swami likes Ottawa Hills big over Monclova and Toledo Christian over Stritch in the finals.

Bryan: Antwerp and Edon are the top seeds. Antwerp is much improved over last year and is in a battle for the GMC title. Edon caught fire in mid-January and is chasing Pettisville in the BBC. Mark Smith is Edon's top player. Hicksville is having another solid season. Edgerton, Montpelier, and North Central are all scuffling. Take Montpelier over North Central and Hicksville over Edgerton in the first round. The Swami likes Antwerp over Montpelier and Hicksville over Edon in the finals.

Wauseon: Pettisville and Holgate are the top seeds. Pettisville only loss was to Holgate during the holidays. The Blackbirds are currently undefeated in the BBC. Holgate is always tough at tournament time under Paul Wayne. The Tigers have won three consecutive district championships. The Tigers have lost to Napoleon, Archbold, Liberty Center, and Wayne Trace while playing a very competitive schedule. Stryker has been involved in a number of close games. Take Stryker over Fayette and Ayersville over Hilltop in the first round. Stryker upsets Pettisville in one final while Holgate eliminates Ayersville in the other final.

Riverdale: Colonel Crawford and Hopewell-Loudon are the top seeds. A first time sectional at the brand new gym in Mount Blanchard. Colonel Crawford started off strong but appears to have peaked. Junior Jake Hessey is the Eagles' top player. Hopewell-Loudon appears to be improving as the season moves along. The Chieftains are coached by former McComb and Margareta boss Brad Britton. Somehow, he is also the tournament manager at the Hopewell-Loudon sectional. That is one busy man. Carey actually got some votes in the first AP poll of the season before embarking on a long losing streak. Fostoria St. Wendelin won the district in '03 but lost a number of players to graduation. Take St. Wendelin over Arcadia and Carey over Vanlue. The Swami likes Crawford over FSW and H-L over Carey in the finals.

Hopewell-Loudon: Tiffin Calvert and New Riegel are the top seeds. Calvert lost ten seniors to graduation and few expected them to have a real shot at the MAL crown. Adam Maas has been the top player for the Senecas. New Riegel is another team looking to be a contender in the MAL. Tyson Depinet leads the Blue Jackets. Mohawk has been disappointing so far this season. Take Old Fort over Bettsville and Mohawk over Seneca East in the first round. The Swami likes Calvert over

The Swami

Old Fort and Mohawk over New Riegel in the finals.

Port Clinton: Danbury and Sandusky St. Mary are the top seeds. This is a good sectional. Danbury lost their opener at Gibsonburg and also lost at Ottawa Hills. The Lakers do not appear to have as many weapons as a year ago but have an outstanding guard in Jake Fanning. A junior, Fanning went over 1,000 points earlier this season and should end up Danbury's all-time leading scorer. Sandusky St. Mary had high expectations for this season but have been inconsistent. The Panthers are talented enough to cause some problems. Aaron Kowaleski, the coach's son, leads the Panthers in scoring. Fremont St. Joseph was considered the team to beat in the mediocre MAL, but the Streaks got off to a slow start. St. Joe was a district runner-up in '03 out of Findlay, and has many of the same players. Norwalk St. Paul is finishing the season strong. Take St. Joe over South Central and St. Paul over Monroeville in the first round. The finals should be very interesting. Take St. Mary over St. Joe and St. Danbury over St. Paul in the finals.

Lexington: Mansfield St. Peter and Buckeye Central are the top seeds. Two top-notch teams at this sectional. Both teams are ranked top 5 in the current AP poll. St. Peter has lost to Mansfield Senior, Louisville Aquinas, and Shelby. The Spartans have an outstanding player in Marcus Butler (committed to Evansville). Buckeye Central spent a week as the state's top ranked squad. The Bucks have lost to Ontario and Wynford. Cory Guttenberg is BC's top player. Take Lucas over Crestline and Plymouth over Mansfield Christian in the first round. The Swami likes St. Pete over Lucas and Buckeye Central over Plymouth in the finals.

DISTRICTS

Wapakoneta: Minster, Marion Local, and Upper Scioto Valley are back again for '04. Take Minster over Hardin-Northern and Marion Local over Upper Scioto Valley in semi-final games. Take Minster over Marion Local in the championship game.

Elida: Take Fort Jennings over Cory-Rawson in the first game. Arlington and Convoy Crestview meet in the second game in a game worthy of a regional final. The Knights knock Arlington from the ranks of the undefeated as Crestview nips the Red Devils. Fort Jennings has a regular season win over Crestview. The Knights avenge that defeat with a win over Jennings in the district final.

Liberty-Benton: Continental eliminates Toledo Christian in one semi-final. Top seeds Van Buren and Ottawa Hills meet in the other semi-final. Ottawa Hills is the best team to come out of the Toledo sectional in several years. Van Buren nips the Green Bears at the buzzer. Continental advances to the regional with a close win over Van Buren in the district final.

Napoleon: Holgate blew out Antwerp in their regular season meeting. This one is much closer, but the Swami learned his lesson last year. Always take Holgate in the district at Napoleon. Holgate over Antwerp. Stryker slips past Hicksville in the other semi-final. Holgate wins the district championship with a win over Stryker.

Fostoria: The Swami doesn't think anyone will win this district. Calvert is the easy choice after they were upset in '03. Colonel Crawford plays in a stronger league. Swami has a gut feeling about Hopewell-Loudon, but no idea why he picked Mohawk to even get to the district. Maybe it will be Carey or New Riegel. Take Crawford over Mohawk in one semi-final. Hopewell-Loudon nips Calvert in the other semi-final. In the finals, take Colonel Crawford over Hopewell-Loudon for the district title.

Willard: Three of the state's top ten in D4 are at Willard. Top seeds Danbury and Mansfield St. Peter meet for the second consecutive in a district semi-final. This year, take the Spartans. The Swami likes Buckeye Central over Sandusky St. Mary in the other semi-final. In the final, take Mansfield St. Pete over BC for the trip to the regional.

We really hope that some of you take the time to read this. See you on the trail. All records are current as of February 8, 2004. The facts and opinions expressed in Trail Trash are those of the Swami and may not necessarily be factual or interesting. Rock on.