

Trail Trash

for the 2004 OHSAA Boys High School Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami



After watching seventeen games at seven venues over the past two weeks, the Swami just realized that we are not even halfway done with the tournament. When you have seen the Marquette brothers more than you have seen your wife during a two-week period, you definitely have some issues. The Swami's numbers for sectional and district play were solid but not spectacular with a 112-38 (75%) win/loss record. The Swami was able to pick seven NW Ohio district champs.

This was a tough week for the teams ranked at the top of the Associated Press' final poll as North Canton Hoover (D1), LaGrange Keystone (D2), Cincinnati North College Hill (D3), and Arlington (D4). It was also a tough week for both Brooklyn and Oberlin. Brooklyn, the top seed at the Elyria district, and unseeded Oberlin met in a sectional final. Oberlin won handily, but was forced to forfeit three days later for using an ineligible player. Brooklyn got back into the tournament but lost to Wellington, another unseeded team, in a district semi-final. Lorain Catholic, the Class AA state runner-up in 1976 and a state participant in 1985, played the final game in school history on March 12, a 45-38 loss to Kidron Central Christian in a district semi-final at Strongsville. LC's 108 points in the 1976 state semi-final game against Wellsville were the most points ever scored in a state tournament game. Lorain Catholic will close at the end of the school year because of dwindling enrollment.

With LeBron gone and the supposed heir to the throne (O.J. Mayo) eliminated, the 2004 state tournament should be a bit

calmer. Rather than any further editorializing, let's go to the predictions. It's Swami time.

DIVISION III

Eleven of the twenty teams ranked by the Associated Press will be playing in the regional. Five teams (Chesapeake, Liberty-Benton, Versailles, Bedford Chanel, and defending D3 state champ Reading) were regional qualifiers in 2003.

REGIONAL

Canton Fieldhouse: #4 Loudonville, #6 Louisville St. Thomas Aquinas, and #11 Bedford Chanel are joined by Leavittsburg LaBrae at Canton for what should be an excellent regional. St. Thomas Aquinas eliminated #19 Youngstown Mooney while Loudonville knocked off #8 Akron Manchester in district finals. Chanel is led by Austin Weatherington and Jarell Brown, and was a state qualifier in 2003. St. Thomas Aquinas has one of the state's top sophomores in Ricky Jackson while another sophomore, Danny Hartman, leads LaBrae. Take Louisville Aquinas over Leavittsburg LaBrae and Loudonville over Chanel in the semi-finals. Take a big and balanced Loudonville squad over Louisville Aquinas in the final.

Bowling Green State University: #6 Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, #7 Liberty-Benton, and #15 St. Henry are joined by 2002 D3 state champ Clear Fork at BG. St. Henry defeated #12 Archbold at the district. St. Henry is a three-time state champ while L-B won the 1995 D4 state championship. Clear Fork has

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an outstanding post player in Connor Gregg. Freshman Nathan Hyde leads L-B in scoring while Jon Bierman is CVCA's top player. Nate Stahl and Kurt Huelsman are the big guns for St. Henry. The Redskins start four players at least 6'4", while Clear Fork's three tournament wins have come against teams with a total of seven regular season losses. Take L-B over CVCA and St. Henry over Clear Fork in the semi-finals. St. Henry will take the regional championship with a win over Liberty-Benton.

Ohio University: #3 Johnstown-Monroe, #9 Bellaire, #13 Ironton, and #14 Chesapeake comprise a great regional at the Convo. Chesapeake eliminated #16 Piketon in a district final. 6'9", 330 lb. Aaron Agnew, an Iowa State recruit, and Nathan Davis lead Bellaire. Johnstown-Monroe from Licking County is one of two undefeated teams remaining in the tournament. Josh Smith is the Johnnies' top player. Veteran coach Norm Persin leads Chesapeake. In the semi-finals, take Bellaire over Ironton and Johnstown-Monroe over Chesapeake. Bellaire defeats Johnstown-Monroe in the championship game to advance to the state tournament.

Wright State University: #2 Versailles is the only ranked team at the Nutter Center. Defending D3 state champ Reading has eliminated #1 Cincinnati North College Hill and #10 Middletown Fenwick from the tournament. Versailles defeated #16 Jamestown Greeneview, and Ripley eliminated #20 Clinton-Massie in district finals. Kyle Gehle and Joe Shardo lead undefeated Versailles. Reading returns two starters from last year's team in Nick Berter and John Gertz. Ripley-Union-Lewis-Huntington from Brown County has somehow fallen off the Swami's radar screen. Take Reading over Ripley and Versailles over Bloom-Carroll in semi-final games. Versailles avenges their 2003 regional loss to Reading in the championship game.

STATE

D3 kicks off the eighty-second boys basketball tournament with a final four consisting of Loudonville, St. Henry, Bellaire, and Versailles. St. Henry was the Class A champ in 1979, the D3 champ in 1990, and the D4 champ in 1991 to go along with the 2000 D4 runner-up spot. Loudonville last made it to the state tournament in 1941. Versailles and St. Henry held down the top two spots in this year's Midwest Athletic Conference standings. Take Loudonville over St. Henry and Versailles over Bellaire in the semi-finals. Versailles wins the state championship with a win over Loudonville in the finals.

DIVISION II

Six of the sixteen teams ranked by the Associated Press have advanced to the regional level. Five teams (defending

state champ Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary, 2003 state qualifier Columbus Beechcroft, Ottawa-Glandorf, Willard, and Dayton Chaminade-Julienne) were also regional qualifiers in 2003.

REGIONAL

Canton Civic Center: #13 Canal Fulton Northwest is the only ranked team at Canton while Warrensville Heights is one of only two teams still in the tournament with a losing record. Korey Spates is an outstanding guard for Warrensville while Rob Skuski leads West Geauga. Bradley Fletcher is Liberty's top player. Matt Lewis, Chuck Sarnsa, and Vince Baiera lead a balanced Northwest squad. Take West Geauga over Liberty and Northwest over Warrensville Heights in the semi-final games. Northwest advances to the state tournament with a win over West G in the championship game

Wright State University: #9 Dayton Chaminade-Julienne and #15 Cincinnati Taft are ranked teams at the Nutter Center. Dayton Dunbar's Daequan Cook might be the state's top sophomore while Derrick Brown is Chaminade's top player. Deandre Byrd leads Cincinnati Taft, and Seth Hill is Columbus Watterson's leading scorer. Take Chaminade over Dunbar and Watterson over Cincinnati Taft in the semi-final games. The Swami had Chaminade going to the state in '03, but Kettering Alter upset the Eagles. This year, Chaminade-Julienne makes the trip to the state with a win over Watterson in the regional final.

University of Toledo: #2 Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary and #3 Ottawa-Glandorf are ranked teams at Toledo. Walsh Jesuit eliminated #1 LaGrange Keystone, O-G stopped #10 Fostoria, Willard survived #8 Port Clinton, and SVSM knocked off #6 Akron Buchtel in district play. AVSM returned only one starter from last year's D2 state champs in Corey Jones, but gained an outstanding transfer in Lawrence Wilson. Twins Tim and Eric Pollitz lead O-G. Willard survived the graduation of the legendary Nick Dials. The Flashes have an outstanding sophomore guard in Jimmy Langhurst. This is O-G's fourth consecutive trip to the regional and SVSM's seventh. Walsh finds out that O-G is no Keystone in one semi-final while SVSM eliminates Willard in the other. SVSM has beaten O-G in the last two regional finals. Ottawa-Glandorf advances to Columbus with a win over Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary in the 2004 final.

Ohio University: #7 Dover is the only ranked team at Athens. Columbus Beechcroft eliminated #5 Newark Licking Valley and #14 Bexley at the district. Dover stopped #11 McConnellsville Morgan in a district final while Greenfield McClain ousted #4 Circleville Logan Elm in sectional play. Raylon Almon is Beechcroft's leading scorer while freshman Dante Jackson is McClain's top player. Veterans Gene Ford and Bob Van Kaenel coach Cambridge and Dover respectively. Take Beechcroft over Cambridge and Dover over McClain in semi-final games. In the finals, Columbus Beechcroft brings home a third consecutive regional crown with a win over Dover.

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STATE

Canal Fulton Northwest, Dayton Chaminade-Julienne, Ottawa-Glandorf, and Columbus Beechcroft make up this year's final four in D2. This will be Chaminade's sixth trip to the state tournament with Class AA (then the big school classification) championships in 1966 and 1970. Beechcroft and Ottawa-Glandorf will both be making their fourth appearances. Take Chaminade over Northwest and Ottawa-Glandorf over Beechcroft in the semi-final games. In the finals, Ottawa-Glandorf takes home its first state championship with a win over Dayton Chaminade-Julienne.

DIVISION IV

Just four of the seventeen teams ranked by the Associated Press have reached the regional tournament. Five teams (defending state champ Marion Local, Sebring McKinley, Holgate, Van Buren, and Reedsville Eastern) repeated as district champions.

REGIONAL

Miami University: No ranked teams at Oxford. Yellow Springs ousted # 6 South Charleston Southeastern and Dayton Jefferson defeated #16 Ansonia at the district. Dustin Rudegear and Jordan Skinner are the big guns for Yellow Springs while Andy Francis is Fairlawn's top player. Marquis Brooks and Milton Mobley lead Jefferson. Marion Local returned no starters from last year's state championship team and is led by Cory Luebke and Russell Moeller. The Flyers finished tied for eighth in the Midwest Athletic Conference. Take Marion Local over Yellow Springs and Dayton Jefferson over Fairlawn in the semi-finals. Marion Local advances to the state tournament with a win over Jefferson in the regional championship game.

Canton Fieldhouse: #3 Sebring McKinley is the only ranked team at Canton. Windham defeated #12 Mogadore, Sebring McKinley stopped #7 Canton Heritage Christian, and Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans eliminated # 9 Berlin Hiland in the district tournament. David Scarpitti leads Sebring McKinley while Paul Zacour is Kidron's top player. Much was expected of Windham this year, but the Bombers lost their best player, Greg McDivett, to injury. Take Sebring McKinley over Windham and Zanesville Rosecrans over Kidron Central Christian in the semi-finals. Bishop Rosecrans advances with a win over Sebring McKinley in the championship game.

Columbus Fairgrounds: #5 Mansfield St. Peter's is the only ranked team at the Barn. St. Peter's defeated #4 Buckeye Central and #10 Danbury at the district tournament. St. Peter's has an outstanding player in Evansville signee

Marcus Butler. South Webster has an outstanding sophomore in Nick Aldridge. Nathan Grubb leads Reedsville Eastern while Lance Sullivan is Columbus Africentric's top player. Africentric is a member of the Columbus City League and finished the regular season with a 7-13 record. This is the Nubians' first year in the OHSAA tournament. Take South Webster over Reedsville Eastern and St. Peter's over Columbus Africentric in the semi-finals. Mansfield St. Peter's takes the regional championship with a win over the South Webster Jeeps.

Bowling Green State University: #15 Van Buren and #17 Fort Jennings are ranked teams at Anderson Arena. Fort Jennings eliminated #1 and previously undefeated Arlington and Holgate ousted #13 Pettisville in district final games. Ryan Schroeder is Fort Jennings' top player while Marty Baird is the leading scorer for Van Buren. Holgate has only given up 32.7 points per game in their three tournament games. Calvert was last year's top-ranked D4 team but lost in the district opener. Aaron Maas is the Senecas' top player. Take Holgate over Calvert and Fort Jennings over Van Buren in the semi-final games. Fort Jennings wins a trip to Columbus by defeating Holgate in the regional final.

STATE

The final four consists of Marion Local, Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans, Mansfield St. Peter's, and Fort Jennings. All four schools have previous state tournament experience with Marion Local (Class A in 1975 and D4 in 2003), Mansfield St. Peter's (Class A in 1968 and 1978), and Fort Jennings (D4 in 2000) all owning state championships. Take Marion Local over Zanesville Rosecrans and Mansfield St. Peter's over Fort Jennings in the semi-finals. Mansfield St. Peter's is the D4 state champion with a win over Marion Local in the finals.

DIVISION I

Six of the twelve teams ranked by the Associated Press have advanced to regional play. Four teams (defending D1 state champ Cincinnati Moeller, Hamilton, Columbus Brookhaven, and Toledo St. John's) are making return trips to the regional. Top ranked North Canton Hoover lost to Austintown Fitch in a district semi-final.

REGIONAL

University of Toledo: No ranked teams at Savage Hall. Olmsted Falls defeated #6 Lakewood St. Edward in a district final. Steve Gansey and Dan Binggeli lead Olmsted Falls while Jonathon Avery and Wright State signee Yima Chia-Kur are Mansfield Senior's top players. Dayton signee Brian Roberts, B.J. Raymond, and Zach Hillesland all started on Toledo St. John's 2003 state qualifier while Joe Roberts is the big gun for Cleveland Rhodes. St. John's has already played ten "home" games at UT this season. Rhodes' win over Cleveland St. Ignatius in a district semi-final ended a string of six consecutive district titles for the Wildcats. Take Olmsted Falls over Mansfield Senior and St. John's over Rhodes in semi

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-final games. Toledo St. John's earns a return trip to the state tournament with a win over Olmsted Falls in the final.

Columbus Fairgrounds: #2 Cincinnati Moeller and #5 Columbus Brookhaven are ranked teams at Columbus. Dublin Coffman eliminated #11 Dublin Scioto in a district semi-final. Moeller returns Xavier signee Josh Duncan, North Carolina State signee Andrew Brackman, and Akron signee Bubba Walther from their state championship team. The Crusaders have lost to Oak Hill Academy and Cincinnati LaSalle. Jamelle Cornley and Denzel Lyles return from Brookhaven's 2003 state runner-up. A third starter, Wright State signee Everett Spencer, was slated to return but transferred just before the start of the season. Cordaryl Ballard is Columbus Mifflin's top player. Take Brookhaven over Coffman and Moeller over Mifflin in the semi-finals. Brookhaven has more experience playing at the Barn, but look for Moeller to sneak past the 'Haven in the regional final.

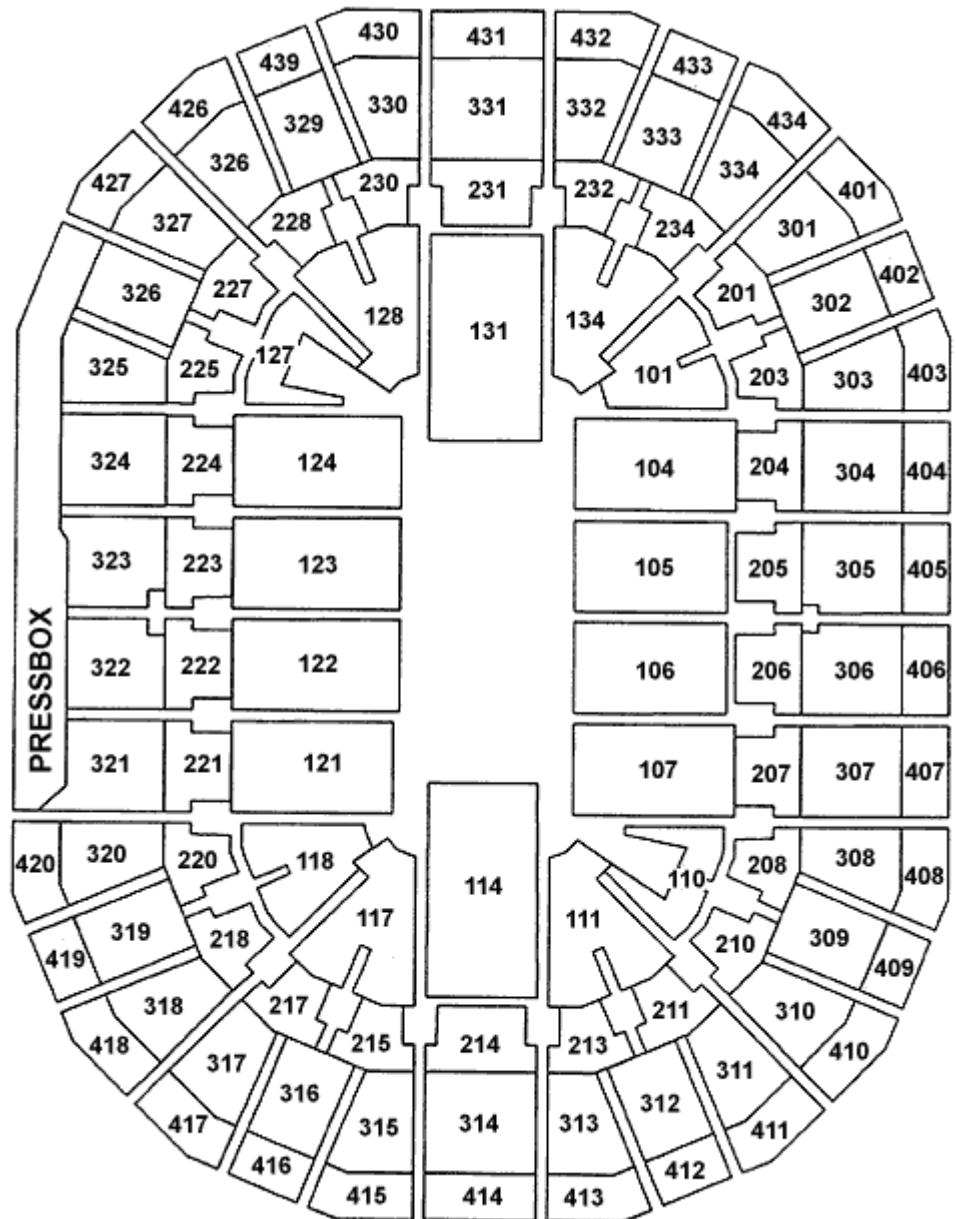
University of Akron: #9 Canton McKinley is the only ranked team at the JAR. Medina defeated #10 Wadsworth in a district final. Cleveland Collinwood has been a surprise team in the Cleveland area while a young Bedford squad knocked off 2003 state qualifier Cleveland Heights in a district final. Stan Hall, Sean Weatherspoon, and Raymar Morgan lead McKinley. Donta Anthony is Medina's leading scorer while Raynold Mitchell leads Cleveland Collinwood. Underclassmen Jason Thompson and Derek Reed are Bedford's top players. Take McKinley over Medina and Bedford over Collinwood in semi-final games. Canton McKinley advances to another state tournament with a win over Bedford in the finals.

University of Dayton: #3 Cincinnati LaSalle, #7 Springfield South, and #8 Hamilton are joined by surprising Cincinnati Sycamore at Dayton. Justin Orr is LaSalle's top player while Isiah Carson is the big gun for Springfield South. Adam Myers-White is the top scorer for a balanced Hamilton team. LaSalle spent much of the season as AP's

top-ranked D1 team before a late season loss to Moeller. LaSalle has a win over Hamilton while Hamilton defeated Springfield South during the regular season. Take Hamilton over Sycamore and LaSalle over Springfield South in semi-final games. The Hamilton Big Blue advance to the state tournament with a win over Cincinnati LaSalle in the championship game.

STATE

DI again closes out the state tournament with a final four consisting of Toledo St. John's, Cincinnati Moeller, Canton



From osubuckeyes.com

Seating Chart for the Value City Arena in the Jerome Shottenstein Center. For those of you that will be attending the state championships in Columbus next week, we have included a seating chart to help you in locating your seats.

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McKinley, and Hamilton. St. John's and Moeller are both making their second consecutive trip to the state tournament. For McKinley, this is their twenty-sixth trip to the state tournament. The Bulldogs were the 1984 Class AAA state champs. Hamilton has not been to the state tournament since 1954 when the Big Blue won their third state championship. Both Hamilton Garfield and Hamilton Taft made trips to the state in the sixties before the two schools were combined. Take Cincinnati Moeller over Toledo St. John's and Canton McKinley over Hamilton in the semi-finals. Cincinnati Moeller defends their state crown with a win over Canton McKinley in the championship game.

That is Trail Trash for another year. The opinions expressed in Trail Trash are those of the Swami. 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. See you in Columbus.



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