

Trail Trash

for the 2005 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler

Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...



The Swami

Welcome to our twelfth annual edition of Trail Trash. When Trail Trash was started way back in 1994, it was just one guy drawing up some brackets and another guy making some predictions. On second thought, it remains exactly the same today. As our readership has grown from single digits to double figures, Trail Trash has become much more politically correct as we attempt to use facts rather than rumors and innuendos. This also marks the second year for the Internet version of Trail Trash at www.davey1.com. Trail Trash is the ultimate source for Northwest Ohio tournament information.

This has been a season of transition for Northwest Ohio basketball. A number of leagues have made significant changes in their schedules in order to give girls' teams the opportunity to play their games on Friday nights. The Northern Lakes League probably made the most radical changes shifting a number of boys' league games to Tuesday and Saturday nights along with playing several boy/girl varsity doubleheaders. Both the Northwest Ohio Athletic League and Buckeye Border Conference moved a large portion of their boys' league games to Thursday nights so the girls could play on Friday nights. The response has been somewhat mixed, but

change of such magnitude is always difficult. We expect more leagues to follow suit in the coming years.

This has also been a season with Christmas and New Year's Day falling on a weekend, an early Easter, and the football playoffs running through the second week of the basketball season. Throw in several winter storms, and a scheduling nightmare was the result for many NW Ohio athletic directors. Hardly a night goes by without at least several high school basketball games being played around NW Ohio.

For the second year, the Northwest District is using a seeding process where all teams get 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 pass with the only restriction being that the top two seeds cannot go to the same bracket. This system is more equitable than the old system and rewards teams that have good seasons but don't get one of the top two seeds. It also makes for some interesting politics.



For those of you new to Trail Trash, we also print a second edition each year previewing the regional and state tournaments. That edition

comes out immediately following completion of the district tournaments. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for Trail Trash, please contact davey1@davey1.com. The Swami can be contacted at swamisig@aol.com. Time to fire up the ouija board. It's Swami time.

DIVISION I

It looks like the usual suspects in D1 for NW Ohio. Toledo St. John's received much of the pre-season hype with the return of three starters from their 2004 D1 state runner-up team. SJ has losses to Canton McKinley, Clayton Northmont in a surprise, and Cincinnati North College Hill, but the Titans should be formidable in the tournament. Lima Senior ran off twelve straight wins to start the season before a loss at Findlay and was briefly the top ranked team in the state according to the Associated Press. Mansfield Senior dropped their opener to Cincinnati Princeton but has not lost since. Toledo Scott won their first twelve games and was ranked in the top five statewide before reality set in for the Bulldogs. A young Toledo Libbey squad might very well be the most dangerous D1 team in NW Ohio. An additional eleven D1 teams were above .500 at the time of the draw with Perrysburg, Bowling Green, Celina, and Tiffin Columbian leading the way. The Liberty-Benton sectional appears to be the most balanced from top to bottom. Once again in 2005, the sectional champs at Willard and Liberty-Benton will remain at those sites to play their district semi-final games. The district final will be played at Ohio Northern. Winners from the two Toledo sectionals will advance to the district at UT's Savage Hall with the Waite winners playing in one semi-final and the Libbey winners playing in the other. The two NW Ohio district champs will advance to the UT regional with the ONU district winner taking on the Grafton district winner (Lakewood St. Edward, Lorain Admiral King, and Lorain Southview are top contenders) while the Toledo winner gets the Berea district winner (Cleveland St. Ignatius, Solon, and Midpark are the favorites).

SECTIONALS

WILLARD: Mansfield Senior and Tiffin Columbian are the top seeds. Defending district champ Mansfield has quietly put together an outstanding season. Other than Jonathan Avery, the Tygers don't have a great deal of size but Mansfield is deep and extremely quick. Playing in the new Ohio Cardinal Conference, questions exist about the strength of their schedule.

The Swami

Tiffin Columbian has put together a solid season in the D2 dominated NOL. Robert Kisabeth is the top player for the Tornadoes. Sandusky and Fremont Ross are having disappointing seasons but remain dangerous. Take Ashland over Marion Harding, Mansfield Madison over Fremont Ross, and Tiffin Columbian over Sandusky to avenge a regular season loss in the first round. In the finals go with Mansfield Senior over Ashland and Tiffin Columbian over Madison.

LIBERTY-BENTON: Lima Senior and Perrysburg are the top seeds. Every team at L-B was at least .500 at the time of the draw. Lima is led by four year starter Travis Walton (Michigan State) and 6'9" Keith Jackson. The Spartans own a win over D2 power Akron SVSM. Bowling Green is currently battling Perrysburg for the NLL title with Maumee on their heels. This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for junior-dominated Bowling Green. Junior Ryan Hoehner leads the Bobcats in scoring. The Swami likes Celina over Anthony Wayne, Bowling Green over Findlay, and Perrysburg over archrival Maumee in the semi-finals. Take Lima Senior over Celina in one final. The Spartans won Celina's holiday tournament with a win over the Bulldogs. Go with Bowling Green over Perrysburg in the other final.

TOLEDO WAITE: Toledo Libbey and Toledo Scott are the top seeds. Even though the top two seeds in Toledo went to the Libbey site, the Waite sectional might be a little stronger from top to bottom. Libbey starts two sophomores (Nate Miles, Phillip Pearson) and a freshman (William Buford). Libbey also added Chris Poellnitz (formerly of Scott and Maumee) in the off-season. The Cowboys' five losses have been by a total of ten points including a two-point loss to Akron SVSM and a one-point loss to St. John's. Libbey has wins over Lima Senior and Columbus Africentric. Joe Suboticki is in his first year coaching at Scott. Scott's top player, Darrion Griffin, followed Suboticki from Waite to Scott. Toledo Central Catholic has been one of the better teams in the City League the second half of the season while Start and Bowsher are having surprising success this year. Take Scott over Springfield, Central over Sylvania Southview, Libbey over Sylvania Northview, and Start over Bowsher in the first round. The Swami likes Central Catholic over Scott in an upset and Libbey over Start in the finals.

(Continued after Division I Brackets)

The Swami

DIVISION II

TOLEDO LIBBEY: Toledo St. John's and Toledo St. Francis are the top seeds. The top two seeds both decided to play at Libbey rather than Waite. B.J. Raymond (Xavier) and Zach Hillesland (Notre Dame) lead the Titans. Hillesland broke a bone in his hand prior to the North College Hill game but returned this weekend. SJ's success in the tournament will depend on how the "other guys" perform. St. Francis has been a big surprise with wins over Libbey and Scott. The Knights have an outstanding player in junior guard Darryl Roberts, the Toledo City League's leading scorer. Bowling Green, Start, and Elida have defeated St. Francis. Oregon Clay is also very sound. The Swami likes Rogers over Waite, Clay over Whitmer, and St. Francis over Woodward in the semi-final games. In the finals, take St. John's over Rogers and St. Francis over Clay in a tight battle.

DISTRICTS

Mansfield and Tiffin Columbian will meet in a district semi-final at Willard while Lima Senior and Bowling Green will play in a district semi-final at Liberty-Benton. Take Mansfield Senior over Columbian and Lima Senior over Bowling Green to set up the showdown in Ada.

OHIO NORTHERN: Mansfield Senior and Lima Senior meet again in the district final. The Tygers and Spartans have had a number of great tournament battles over the years with the 2000 game probably the most memorable. These two teams present a lot of similarities. Look for Lima to avenge last year's loss in the district final with a tight win over Mansfield.

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: Unlike last year, St. John's won't be playing the district on their "home" floor when they played thirteen games at Savage Hall. Look for Libbey to avenge a regular season defeat at the hands of Central Catholic. In the other semi-final St. John's will face archrival St. Francis for the second time (and possibly third depending on the Toledo City League playoffs) in a matter of weeks. Take St. John's over St. Francis. The district final will be played on Sunday afternoon when SJ and Libbey meet. St. John's edged Libbey for the 2004 district title. St. John's is the three-time defending district champion. Take a young but talented Libbey team over St. John's for the district crown.



When the 2004 season closed, it appeared that Fostoria and Willard would be the top D2 clubs for the 2005. That changed when Keith Diebler took the coaching job at Upper Sandusky and took sons Jake and Jon with him. The Rams are currently undefeated and no opponent has come within single digits of Upper. Willard returned four starters from their '04 district championship team, but the Flashes have stumbled a bit in the very tough Northern Ohio League. State champ Ottawa-Glandorf suffered heavy graduation losses i.e. the Pollitz twins and has fallen to the middle of the pack in the Western Buckeye League. State-ranked Van Wert and St. Marys Memorial are the top WBL teams this season. Elida and Norwalk are also top-notch D2 teams, but there is a real drop-off after that with only three other teams above .500 at the time of the draw. D2 basketball in NW Ohio continues to be dominated by the NOL and the WBL. Although maybe not as strong from top to bottom as in previous years, the sectional at Lima Senior remains the strongest while the sectional at Springfield is arguably the weakest. The new gymnasium at Lima Senior will host the sectional after a one-year stay at Ohio Northern while Springfield has replaced Perrysburg as a D2 site. The two NW Ohio district winners will face off in the regional at the University of Toledo. The Barberton district winner (Akron SVSM, Akron Buchtel, Akron Hoban) will play the Olmsted Falls district winner (Firelands, Rocky River?) at Canton in the other semi-final. The winner (which the Swami guarantees will come out of Barberton) will face the NW Ohio survivor in a regional final at UT.

SECTIONALS

LIMA SENIOR: Van Wert and St. Marys Memorial are the top seeds. This all-WBL sectional is excellent as usual. Injuries have hindered Van Wert starters John Moonshower and Kyle Holliday late in the season. The Cougars will need to get healthy if they are to be a force in the tournament. Van Wert has an excellent guard in Rian Rainey. St. Marys got a late start following their successful run in the football playoffs. St. Marys had lost only to Ottawa-Glandorf and St. Henry at the time of the draw. Wes

(Continued after Division II Brackets)

Clark leads a balanced scoring attack for the Roughriders. Elida also is having an outstanding season. Dustin Mathias leads the Elida attack. Wapakoneta had high expectations but started slowly after an injury to leading scorer Austin McCormick. With McCormick back, Wapak has become a force. It is difficult to fathom O-G having a down year. The Titans have had some problems scoring this year but remain dangerous. Take Ottawa-Glandorf in a tight one over Wapak, Elida over Shawnee, and St. Marys over Bath in the semi-finals. The Swami likes Van Wert over defending state champ O-G, and Elida over St. Marys for sectional titles.

SPRINGFIELD: Wauseon and Napoleon are the top seeds. Wauseon is the only team with a winning record at Springfield. The Indians suffered heavy graduation losses from last year's district runner-up but return leading score Jake Reckner. Wauseon has found it difficult at times to put points on the board. Napoleon and Defiance are having inconsistent seasons. Larry Ward leads Napoleon while Graham Wagner is Defiance's leading scorer. Eastwood has been a disappointment. Injuries and illness have hurt the Eagles, and any success Eastwood might have in the tournament will depend on the health of leading scorer Kevin Leady. Take Eastwood over Rossford, Defiance over Paulding, and Napoleon over Bryan in the semi-finals. In the finals, look for Wauseon to edge Eastwood and Defiance to nip Napoleon.

SANDUSKY: Norwalk and Port Clinton are the top seeds. Expectations were high this year for Norwalk after winning a sectional title in 2004 with no seniors on the roster. Stephon Hunter and Shane Johnston are the big guns for Norwalk. The Truckers recently ended a seventeen game losing streak to Willard. Port Clinton is young with only two seniors on the squad. The Redskins have talent but have been inconsistent. Clyde and Oak Harbor are middle of the pack SBC teams. Bellevue is having their third consecutive down year while Perkins starts four sophomores. Norwalk opted to play in the first round rather than taking the bye. Take the Truckers over Fostoria in one semi-final and over Bellevue in the final. The bottom bracket is anyone's guess. Take Oak Harbor over Clyde and Port Clinton over Perkins in the semi-finals. Take Oak Harbor over Port Clinton in the other final in a mild upset.

MANSFIELD MADISON: Upper Sandusky and Willard are the top seeds. Keith Diebler inherited a veteran team at Upper. Greg Micheli recently surpassed 1,000 points for his career and

The Swami

complements Jake and Jon Diebler. The Rams recently clinched their first NOL title in 40 years. Willard junior Jimmy Langhurst is one of the top guards in the state. Despite being an experienced team, the Flashes start four juniors. Shelby has been solid despite heavy graduation losses while Galion has an excellent player in J.B. Shuck. Lexington holds a win over Willard while Ontario still has a shot at sharing the North Central Conference crown. Kenton has not won a game since beating Toledo Woodward late in the 2002-2003 season. Take Galion over Kenton, Willard over Lex, and Shelby over Ontario in the first round. The Swami likes Upper Sandusky over Galion and Willard over Shelby in the title games.

DISTRICTS

BGSU: WBL teams have dominated this district for years with Wauseon in 1994 being the last non-WBL team to win the district crown. 2005 should be no exception with three WBL teams at BG. Don't expect Van Wert to have much trouble with Defiance in one semi-final. The same will hold true in the other semi with Elida handling Wauseon. In the district final, look for a mild upset as Elida defeats Van Wert.

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY: Three NOL teams dominate the field at AU. This district features a great semi-final with Norwalk facing Willard. The Swami says go with tradition and take Willard in a close battle. In the other semi-final, take Upper Sandusky big over Oak Harbor. Upper Sandusky has too many weapons and too much size for Willard. Take Upper although it will be close.

DIVISION III

This has been an excellent year for D3 basketball in NW Ohio even though you wouldn't know it from looking at the AP poll. Defending D3 state champ St. Henry and Delphos St. John's have been fixtures in the AP top ten with Archbold the only other team getting regular mention in the poll. St. Henry got a late start after their football championship. The Redskins returned two starters and some key players off the bench from last year. Delphos has losses to D2 Elida and Van Wert, and owns a win over St. Henry. Woodmore and New London each currently have only one loss while Spencerville has a pair of losses, but none have gotten any love statewide.

(Continued after Division III Brackets)

Twenty-two of the thirty-three D3 teams in NW Ohio had records above .500 at the time of the draw. The sectionals at Elida, Norwalk, and Galion all figure to be outstanding. The sectional at Sylvania Northview appears to be the weakest. There are no venue changes for '05 in D3. The three district winners will advance to the regional at BG's ancient Anderson Arena. The Ohio Northern winner will play the Ontario winner, and the Toledo Waite winner will play the Elyria winner in the regional semi-finals. Rocky River Lutheran West, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, Wellington, and Oberlin appear to be the top teams at Elyria. Lutheran West is led by one of the top juniors in Ohio in 6'9" Richard Semrau.

SECTIONALS

ELIDA: Delphos St. John's and St. Henry are the top seeds. Excellent sectional. Nate Stahl and 6'9" Kurt Huelsman are returning starters while Ross Niekamp was the first player off the bench last year for defending D3 champ St. Henry. Chad Reynolds and Matt Webb lead Delphos St. John's. Spencerville has a win at Elida, and has lost only to Minster and Columbus Grove. Logan Nourse leads a balanced scoring attack for the Bearcats. Lima Central Catholic is a typical Bob Seggerson coached team. The T-Birds are fundamentally sound and play great defense. LCC will be moving into the Northwest Conference next year. Coldwater has been a disappointment. Take Spencerville over Parkway and LCC over Coldwater in the first round. Coldwater defeated LCC earlier in the season. In the finals, the Swami likes Delphos St. John's over Spencerville and St. Henry over Lima Central Catholic

NAPOLEON: Archbold and Liberty Center are the top seeds. Archbold has one of the top guards in NW Ohio in Dan Borchardt. Freshman Gene Goering joins Borchardt as a double-figure scorer for the Streaks. Archbold's only loss was early in the season to Evergreen. Liberty Center remains a contender in the NWOAL race. Kasey Bodenbender leads the Tigers in scoring. Liberty has been bolstered by the return of two players who missed their junior seasons because of injury and illness respectively, Eric Wymer and Brennen Flory. A young Wayne Trace team is chasing Holgate for the GMC title. Take Wayne Trace over Tinora in the only semi-final. In the finals, Swami likes Wayne Trace over Liberty Center and

The Swami

Archbold over Fairview.

SYLVANIA NORTHVIEW: Delta and Evergreen are the top seeds. Another five team sectional. This is the only D3 sectional where the combined records of the participants fall below the .500 mark. After a number of sub-par seasons, Delta has been a surprise in the NWOAL and still has a shot at the league title. Evergreen has quality wins at Archbold and Patrick Henry, but the Vikings have been inconsistent. Lake, Genoa, and Swanton are all having down years. Genoa has no seniors on their squad, while it appeared Lake might not have any extracurricular activities this year because of money problems. Swanton is improved over last season. Take Lake over Swanton in the only semi-final. Take Evergreen over Lake and Delta over Genoa in the finals.

FINDLAY: Otsego and Elmwood are the top seeds. Otsego received a great deal of notoriety early in the season when one of their players jumped into the stands to battle a heckler from Woodmore. Casey Donald leads Otsego in scoring while Matt Warner, a transfer from Toledo Central Catholic, has been a key to the Knights' late season surge. Elmwood has put together a solid season with Chad Reynolds and sophomore Dustin Reynolds (the son of the head coach) leading the way. Defending district champ Liberty-Benton has started to come on late in the season. Sophomore Nathan Hyde is the top player for a smallish L-B squad. Patrick Henry got a late start to their season after advancing to the state football semi-finals. PH has been inconsistent but owns wins over Elmwood and L-B. The Patriots are looking to get Marc Krauss back from an injury for the tournament. BGSU football signee Mike Ream leads Bluffton while Lakota's Trevor Hohman is one of the better players in the SLL. Take L-B over Lakota and PH over Bluffton in the first round. Tradition takes over in the finals with L-B over Otsego and PH over Elmwood.



nwtech.com

NORWALK: Woodmore and Huron are the top seeds. This is another very solid sectional. Woodmore is in the midst of an outstanding season with only an early season

loss at Otsego marring their record. Tyler Rosenberger is Woodmore's top player while Joe Nowak and Brian Perkins join Rosenberger as double-figure scorers. Huron is currently on a ten-game winning streak. Gibsonburg has been solid in the SLL while junior-dominated Western Reserve has been a contender in the Firelands Conference. Edison is much improved this season. Margareta is the only team with a losing record, but the Polar Bears sport an outstanding player in Ben Boos. Take Edison over Margareta and Western Reserve over Gibsonburg in the semi-finals. The Swami likes Woodmore over Edison and looks for Huron to edge Western Reserve in the finals.

GALION: New London and Wynford are the top seeds. Yet another solid D-3 sectional. All five teams were at least at .500 as of the tournament draw. New London has an outstanding big man in Eric Marschall (BGSU). The Wildcats only loss to date was at Western Reserve. New London has clinched at least a share of the Firelands Conference while Wynford is currently the leader in the NCC. Joe Kalb is the leading scorer for the Royals. Clear Fork is playing its first season in the Ohio Cardinal Conference. Clear Fork is the smallest school in the OCC, but the Colts have held their own against teams such as Mansfield Senior and Orrville. Josh Fraley is Clear Fork's top player. Bucyrus and Ashland Crestview are having very solid seasons. Take Bucyrus over Ashland Crestview in the only semi-final. Take Wynford over Bucyrus in one final. Clear Fork eliminated New London in last year's sectional, and it is very tempting to take the Colts again given their schedule. Take New London over Clear Fork but it will be close.

DISTRICTS

OHIO NORTHERN: Three outstanding teams at the ONU district. Delphos St. John's takes on Archbold in a great semi-final. The Swami likes Delphos St. John's in a nail-biter. St. Henry should have little trouble with Wayne Trace in the other semi-final. Delphos St. John's won the regular season battle with St. Henry. St. Henry advances with a win over Delphos St. John's in the district final.

TOLEDO WAITE: Three NWOAL teams and Liberty-Benton make the trek to East Toledo. Evergreen already has a one-point win at Patrick Henry. Look for PH to bounce back against Evergreen in the district semi-final. Liberty-Benton will edge Delta in the other semi-final. Patrick Henry

The Swami

easily defeated L-B at PH back in December. An improved Liberty-Benton team takes the district final with a narrow win over Patrick Henry.

ONTARIO: Two of the top D3 teams in NW Ohio, New London and Woodmore, meet in one semi-final. Woodmore has too many weapons and defeats the Wildcats. Wynford has historically given Huron fits in the tournament. Nothing new in 2005 as Wynford eliminates Huron in the other semi-final. The Swami likes Woodmore over Wynford in the district final.

DIVISION IV

Every year ad nauseam, we preach that the best D4 basketball in the state is played in NW Ohio. Last year proved the Swami correct once again as two NW Ohio teams, Holgate and Marion Local, played for the state championship. You can forget your Columbus Africentric's, 2005 is no exception. Van Buren started the season with thirteen straight wins and was the state's top ranked team before losing to Pandora-Gilboa. Undefeated Danbury, Pettisville, and Ayersville have all been ranked throughout the year with defending state champ Holgate, Minster, and Continental all getting mention. Ottoville, Columbus Grove, Arlington, Pandora-Gilboa, New Bremen, Fort Recovery, Fostoria St. Wendelin, and Tiffin Calvert have all put together solid seasons and just validate what we have been saying for years. The sectionals at Coldwater and Wauseon appear to be the strongest with the infamous Waynesfield-Goshen and Bryan sectionals being the weakest. No changes in location in either the sectionals or districts for 2005. District winners from Napoleon, Fostoria, Elida, and Liberty-Benton will advance to the regional at BG's Anderson Arena with the Napoleon and Fostoria winners in one semi-final and the Elida and Liberty-Benton winners in the other. The Wapakoneta district winner advances to the University of Dayton to take on one of the three Dayton district winners (Ansonia?) while the Willard district winner advances to the Fairgrounds Coliseum aka "The Barn" in Columbus to face one of the two Athens district winners (South Webster?).

(Continued after Division IV Brackets)

SECTIONALS

COLDWATER: Minster and Fort Recovery are the top seeds. This is once again a top-notch sectional featuring five MAC teams. Every team was at .500 or above as of the draw. Minster is chasing Delphos St. John's for the MAC crown. Dane Sommer is Minster's top player. Travis VanSkyock leads Fort Recovery. New Bremen got off to a quick start but cooled off after getting into their MAC schedule. Marion Local didn't get one of last year's top seeds, but advanced all the way to the state championship before losing to Holgate. Marion won the 2003 D4 state championship, and Ryan Winner returns from that team. New Knoxville and Waynesfield-Goshen are both very solid this year. Take New Knoxville over Waynesfield-Goshen and New Bremen over Marion Local in the semi-finals. The Swami likes Minster over New Knoxville and New Bremen over Fort Recovery in the finals.

WAYNESFIELD-GOSHEN: Allen East and Ada are the top seeds. Teams from this sectional are normally dominated by the MAC teams at the district. Allen East got the top seed despite a 6-10 record while Ada took the second seed with a 7-8 record. Upper Scioto Valley had the best record at the draw but didn't get a top seed. Damien Plaughter from Hardin-Northern scored 56 against Arcadia earlier in the month, but the Polar Bears have only scored 58 total in their two games since. Take USV over Lima Perry and Hardin-Northern over winless Ridgemont in the first round. The Swami likes Upper Scioto Valley over Ada and Allen East over Hardin-Northern in the finals.

VAN WERT: Ottoville and Convoy Crestview are the top seeds. Ottoville continues to chase Continental for the PCL title. Josh Vorst is the top player for the Big Green. Both Convoy Crestview and Kalida are playing well as the tournament approaches, while Fort Jennings appears to be on the downswing. Dick Kortokrax of Kalida recently coached the 1,000th game of his career. Big Luke Lichtensteiger leads Crestview while Luke Swartz is the top player for Fort Jennings. Take Kalida over Fort Jennings and Lincolnview over Delphos Jefferson in the first round. The Swami likes Convoy Crestview over Kalida in a close one and Ottoville over Lincolnview in the finals.

LIMA BATH: Arlington and Columbus Grove are the top seeds. There are four very evenly matched teams at Bath. This looked to be a rebuilding year

The Swami

for Arlington, but the Red Devils still have a shot at the BVC crown. Kyle Meyer leads a balanced Grove squad. Pandora-Gilboa handed Van Buren their first loss of the season. Riverdale is above .500 for the first time since the mid-90's. Take Pandora-Gilboa over Lima Temple Christian and Riverdale over winless Cory-Rawson in the first round. Take Pandora-Gilboa over Arlington and Columbus Grove over Riverdale in the finals.

OTTAWA-GLANDORF: Continental and Van Buren are the top seeds. Continental is currently leading the PCL. The Pirates have an outstanding guard in Kurtis Brown and a nice inside player in Nick Wilson. Van Buren won thirteen straight before losing back-to-back games to Pandora-Gilboa and Kalida. The Black Knights bounced back with wins over Liberty-Benton and Fostoria St. Wendelin. Marty Baird and Blake Tucker have started on VB's district championship teams the past two seasons. Not much separates the other four teams playing at O-G although McComb has a win over Arlington. Take McComb over Miller City and Leipsic over North Baltimore in the semi-finals. Take Continental over McComb and Van Buren over Leipsic in the finals.

SYLVANIA SOUTHVIEW: Ottawa Hills and Toledo Christian are the top seeds. The TAAC invitational returns to Southview for a second year. Ottawa Hills and Toledo Christian are battling for second place behind undefeated Danbury in the TAAC. Toledo Christian opened the season with a win over Holgate. This was to be a rebuilding year for Ottawa Hills after heavy graduation losses, but the Green Bears have been competitive. Cardinal Stritch has also remained competitive despite several player suspensions. Craig Choka from Maumee Valley is one of the top players in the TAAC. Take Maumee Valley over Monclova Christian and Cardinal Stritch over Northwood in the first round. In the finals, the Swami likes Toledo Christian over Maumee Valley and Ottawa Hills over Cardinal Stritch.

BRYAN: Hicksville and Antwerp are the top seeds. Edgerton is the only team at Bryan with a winning record, but the Bulldogs failed to get a top seed. Hicksville got a late start following an extended run in the football playoffs, but the Aces are having a solid season. Antwerp's top player is Aaron Taylor. Edgerton started the season at 5-0 including a win over Holgate.

The Swami

Big A.J. Hephner leads Montpelier. North Central was not going to have a team this year until extracurricular activities were reinstated in mid-November. Take Edgerton over Edon and Montpelier over North Central in the first round. The Swami likes Edgerton over Antwerp and Hicksville over Montpelier in the finals.

WAUSEON: Pettisville and Holgate are the top seeds. Pettisville started the season 8-0 before losing at Stryker. Justin Rufenacht leads the Blackbirds. Holgate returned three starters from last year's state championship team, but the Tigers started off 2-3. Holgate is currently on a twelve-game winning streak giving up just 27.5 points per game during that period. Ayersville has been state-ranked since the first poll, but the Pilots have been faltering of late. Anthony Jackson is Ayersville's top player. Stryker is currently undefeated in the BBC. Take Stryker over Hilltop and Ayersville over Fayette in the semi-finals. The Swami likes Pettisville over Stryker and Holgate over Ayersville in the finals.

RIVERDALE: Fostoria St. Wendelin and Colonel Crawford are the top seeds. The sectional returns to Riverdale for a second year. Fostoria St. Wendelin recently had an eleven game winning streak broken by Van Buren. Colonel Crawford started off 8-1 but has staggered since the early January. Jake Hessey is the big gun for the Eagles while Duane Posey leads the Hopewell-Loudon attack. Vanlue is having a rare winning season. Take Hopewell-Loudon over Vanlue and Carey over Arcadia in the first round. The Swami likes Colonel Crawford over Hopewell-Loudon and Fostoria St. Wendelin over Carey in the finals.

HOPEWELL-LOUDON: Tiffin Calvert and New Riegel are the top seeds. Calvert jumped off to a 7-0 start and was ranked in the statewide polls before a mid-season swoon. It appears the Senecas have righted the ship. Aaron Mass leads a balanced Calvert attack. New Riegel for a time appeared to be the team to beat in the MAL, but the Blue Jackets are currently struggling. Junior Travis Kinn leads NR. Mohawk has been coming on strong late in the season. Kaleb Farber tops the Warriors in scoring. Take Old Fort over Seneca East and Mohawk over Bettsville in the semi-final games. Look for Calvert over Old Fort and New Riegel over Mohawk in a close one in the finals.

PORT CLINTON: Danbury and Fremont St. Joseph are

the top seeds. Danbury remains one of two undefeated teams in NW Ohio. The Lakers have their highest state ranking since 1965 (when they were eliminated in the sectional at PC). Jake Fanning, the all-time leading Danbury scorer, does everything for the Lakers. Jarret Ensign is having a solid senior season for Danbury. Fremont St. Joseph already has had eleven games decided by five points or less. The Crimson Streaks feature a solid post player in David Rice. The other four teams at PC appear to be very evenly matched. Take Sandusky St. Mary's over South Central and Norwalk St. Paul over Monroeville in the first round. The Swami likes Fremont St. Joe over Sandusky St. Mary's in one final and Danbury with a win over Norwalk St. Paul in the other.

LEXINGTON: Mansfield St. Peter's and Lucas are the top seeds. Mansfield St. Peter's is the defending district champ. Junior Brandon Speck of St. Pete is one of the outstanding D4 players in NW Ohio. Lucas started off slowly but is currently playing extremely well. Plymouth has been somewhat of a disappointment in the Firelands Conference. Brett Turson leads the Big Red. Take Plymouth over Buckeye Central and Crestline over winless Mansfield Christian in the first round. In the finals, the Swami likes Plymouth in an upset of Mansfield St. Peter's and Lucas over Crestline.

DISTRICTS

WAPAKONETA: The MAC teams typically have little trouble with the teams from the Waynesfield-Goshen sectional. Take Minster big over Allen East and New Bremen big over Upper Scioto Valley in the semi-final games. In the final, Minster eliminates New Bremen for the trip to the Dayton regional.

ELIDA: Take Columbus Grove over Convoy Crestview in one semi-final and Ottoville over Pandora-Gilboa in the other semi-final. Columbus Grove and Ottoville is almost too close to call in the final. Grove has an early season win over the Big Green in a game played at Columbus Grove. Go with Grove over Ottoville in overtime in the final.

LIBERTY-BENTON: The TAAC teams haven't had much luck at L-B. Ottawa Hills probably had the best chance in 2004 losing to district champ Van Buren in overtime after losing their big man to an injury early in the game. Take Continental over Ottawa Hills and Van Buren over Toledo Christian in the semi-finals. Van Buren edged Continental for the district title last year. Take Continental this year with a win over Van Buren in the final.

The Swami

NAPOLEON: The semi-finals are a mere formality with Holgate avenging a regular season loss to Edgerton and Pettisville knocking off Hicksville. Last year, Holgate beat Pettisville at the buzzer in overtime for the district championship. Always take Holgate in the district at Napoleon. Holgate defeats Pettisville in the final for the Tigers' fifth consecutive district championship.

FOSTORIA: This is always a difficult district for the Swami. Take Tiffin Calvert and they don't win it. Take somebody other than Calvert and the Senecas win it. New Riegel nipped Colonel Crawford during the regular season and both teams are slumping as the tournament approaches. Take Colonel Crawford over New Riegel in one semi-final. Calvert has a regular season win over Fostoria St. Wendelin. Take Tiffin Calvert over St. Wendelin in the other semi-final. Go with Tiffin Calvert over Colonel Crawford for the district championship.

WILLARD: Take Lucas over Fremont St. Joseph in one semi-final. Danbury playing Mansfield St. Peter's would have been a great story line for this district given all the problems the Lakers have had against St. Pete. Take Danbury over Plymouth in the other semi-final. The Swami likes Danbury over Lucas in the final for the trip to the regional.

That's it. We hope you enjoyed this edition of Trail Trash. All records and statistics are current as of February 7, 2005. The facts and opinions stated in Trail Trash are those of the Swami and may not necessarily be factual or interesting. See you along the tournament trail. Rock on.