

Trail Trash

2017 OHSAA Boys High School
Basketball Tournament

Published exclusively by Dave Spengler
and on the net at www.Davey1.com

Featuring Commentary &
Predictions by ...

The Swami

Welcome to year number twenty-four for Trail Trash. It is mind boggling that we have been doing this thing for that many years. At least it isn't required reading.

The Northern Ohio League, which has been around since 1944, will cease to exist after this season. Bellevue, Norwalk, Shelby, and Willard have been NOL members all seventy-three years. Those four along with Sandusky and Tiffin Columbian will join the Sandusky Bay Conference while Ontario will move to the Mid Ohio Athletic Conference for the 2017/2018 school year. When I think of NOL basketball, the dominant Willard teams under Bob Haas come to mind. The Class AA regional finals at Anderson Arena in 1980 and 1981 with undefeated Willard meeting undefeated Napoleon. A large, loud, obnoxious fan base. Making four trips to the state tournament, the Flashes were a state power despite never getting to the championship game. Upper

Since 1994, Trail Trash has been published twice annually in conjunction with the state boys basketball tournament brackets, Trail Trash has included the expert predictions of the Swami. For those of you familiar with the Swami, we say no more. For the small number of you not familiar with the Swami, he is the self-proclaimed guru on Northwest Ohio high school hoops.

Since the fall of 2004 Davey1.com has featured the most complete collection of Ohio Boys High School Basketball Schedules and results that can be found in one place anywhere on the internet. We have gathered all of the schedules from the schools in the OHSAA Northwest District. We wrote our own special software using a Microsoft Access database to compile and display our schedules. Nowhere else will you find the amount of information that we present on Davey1.com.

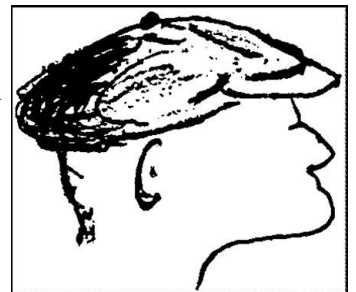
Issue 2017-1
Sandusky followed with an undefeated state championship team in 2005 and a runner-up finish in 2007 during the Diebler era. Then Norwalk brought home a D2 state championship in 2014 closing out a three-year period where the Truckers only lost three games. Other leagues have come and gone over the past few years, but it will be very different without the NOL.

This also marks the final basketball season before OHSAA's Competitive Balance plan begins. The Swami is looking forward to seeing this play out. And with a straight face, the Swami can say that he doesn't watch NASCAR races just to see the wrecks. Okay, maybe once in awhile. Enrollment numbers are to be finalized in March, adjusted numbers based on current rosters are to be established in May, and the division assignments are to be approved by the OHSAA in June. We should see a great deal of movement between divisions throughout the state and around Northwest Ohio. It will be a very interesting process. Let us hope that it works out better than the implementation of Arbiter Live.

Time to break out the Ouija board and go to the predictions and all sorts of interesting (?) stuff.

DIVISION I

2017 marks the second year that D1 for Northwest Ohio has a single district tournament with just one team advancing to the regional tournament. Toledo St. John's Jesuit is the class of the field. There is plenty of quality with thirteen of the seventeen teams having records above .500. Toledo St. Francis started out 13-1 and was ranked as high as #4 by the Associated Press. Toledo Bowsher is as talented as any team in NW Ohio. Lima Senior lost four starters from their 29-1 state runner-up but expected to have two highly touted transfers from Puerto Rico to go along with returning starter Jarius Ward.



Trail Trash

However, the transfers were ruled ineligible by the OHSAA. Attorneys got involved and one of the transfers, Javier Quinones, was eventually cleared to play. His participation was limited to regular season games, and Quinones will not be playing in the tournament as part of the agreement.

Fostoria has replaced Lakota as a sectional site. Fostoria might be a little easier to get to but not much. Liberty-Benton would have been a good site. The University of Toledo district champion will return to Savage Arena for a regional semifinal game against the winner of the Elyria district (Lorain, Elyria). That regional semifinal winner will play the winner of the University of Akron regional semifinal between the Canton (Massillon Jackson, North Canton Hoover, Copley) and Copley (Akron Hoban, Medina, Brunswick) district winners. The regional final will again be played at Akron.

SECTIONALS

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC (UT DISTRICT): #1 Toledo St. John's and #2 Toledo St. Francis are the top seeds at the Sullivan Center. St. John's is the TRAC champion. The only losses for the Titans were to Lima Senior and Canton McKinley in back-to-back December games. SJJ's Ed Heintschel is in his 38th year coaching the Titans and still has a full head of hair. He currently ranks 5th all time in career wins in Ohio closing in on #700. The Titans have won 19 straight sectional titles. For some reason, St Francis went to St. John's side of the bracket. What the heck was Travis (Lewis) thinking? You've already lost twice to St. John's. Anthony Wayne and Sylvania Southview still have a chance at getting at least a share of the NLL title. The two will play the final Friday of the regular season followed by what should be a very good sectional semifinal the following Wednesday. All four teams with losing records in the district are in the sectional at Central Catholic with three of them (Fremont Ross, Springfield, Clay) in the same bracket as St. John's. Mansfield Senior and Sylvania Northview will meet in the quarterfinal game. The Tygers are in the midst of a down year but have been playing better of late. That's a long trip from Mansfield.

Quarterfinal – Sylvania Northview over Mansfield Senior

Semifinals – Toledo St. John's over Oregon Clay; Fremont Ross over Springfield; Toledo St. Francis over Sylvania Northview; Anthony Wayne over Sylvania Southview

Finals – Toledo St. Francis over Anthony Wayne; Toledo St. John's over Fremont Ross

FOSTORIA (UT DISTRICT): #3 Toledo Bowsher and #4

Toledo Whitmer are the top seeds at Fostoria. All eight teams at FHS have winning records. When St. Francis decided to stay home, the next five seeds decided to head for Fostoria. If St. Francis had done what most expected and head to Fostoria, it would have forced Bowsher to choose between St. John's and St. Francis. Bowsher lost big to St. Francis back in December. The Rebels are undefeated in the Toledo City League heading into the TCL's four-team playoff. However, Bowsher lacks quality wins. Whitmer, Lima Senior, and Findlay are in a battle with St. Francis for 2nd place in the TRAC. Whitmer was supposed to be in a rebuilding year while Findlay hung with St. John's in their two games. Lima Senior has been inconsistent but is the team that nobody wants to play in the tournament. The Spartans will meet #13 Toledo Waite in a sectional semifinal. Ashland currently resides in 2nd place in the OCC. Perrysburg has the inside track to get at least a share of the NLL title but could get no better than a #9 seed. This should be a very good sectional.

Semifinals – Toledo Bowsher over Perrysburg; Findlay over Ashland; Toledo Whitmer over Toledo Start; Lima Senior over Toledo Waite

Finals – Toledo Bowsher over Findlay; Lima Senior over Toledo Whitmer

DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: Lima Senior won their second straight district title in 2016.

Semifinals – Toledo St. John's over Toledo St. Francis; Toledo Bowsher over Lima Senior

Final – Toledo St. John's over Toledo Bowsher

DIVISION II

NW Ohio did not have a D2 team advance to the state tournament in 2016 after having state champions in 2014 (Norwalk) and 2015 (Defiance) as Bay Village defeated Napoleon and Ottawa-Glandorf to win the regional. That marked the third time in the past eight seasons that NW Ohio was not represented in Columbus at the D2 level.

Upper Sandusky is the top ranked D2 team in Ohio according to the Associated Press. Interestingly enough,

Trail Trash

Upper didn't even get the top seed in the Ohio Northern district as that honor went to Ottawa-Glandorf. O-G has been a fixture in the top five while Wapakoneta was in the AP's top ten before their recent loss to O-G. Nine of the twelve teams in the ONU district have records at or above .500 so there should be competitive games. That being said, this district still comes down to Ottawa-Glandorf, Upper Sandusky, and Wapak.

Eight of the twelve teams in the Mansfield district will enter the tournament with records above .500. Sandusky is the top dog on paper but the strength of this district is a mystery with a couple of the higher seeds (Lexington, Vermilion) really scuffling as tournament time approaches. Galion has replaced Ashland as a sectional site with Mansfield Senior replacing Galion as the site of the district tournament. There was just not enough seating at Galion to host a D2 district. Whatever happened to having the district tournament at Ashland University?

Then there's the Bowling Green district. Only three of the twelve teams have a chance to start tournament play at .500 or above. A Toledo Central Catholic team with five wins (none against teams with a winning record) actually got the #4 seed. State ranked Wauseon is the odds-on favorite to win this district.

The D2 regional tournament will move from BG's Stroh Center to Savage Arena at the University of Toledo. UT last hosted the D2 regional in 2012. The Mansfield Senior will meet the BGSU district winner in one semifinal game while the Ohio Northern district winner will meet the North Ridgeville district winner (Parma Heights Holy Name, Bay, Medina Buckeye, Lorain Clearview) in the other regional semifinal.

SECTIONALS

ANTHONY WAYNE (BGSU DISTRICT): #1 Wauseon is the top seed at AW. Wauseon is the NWOAL champion. Their only loss was to D3 Genoa in early December when the Indians were playing without 6'9" Austin Rotroff. The biggest question concerning Wauseon is the strength of their schedule. Wauseon's best non-league wins came against Anthony Wayne, Sylvania Southview, and Defiance. Napoleon returned only one starter, Jordan Lauf, from the 2016 district championship team. Lauf is averaging around 27 points per game and had 50 against Sylvania Northview back in December. Eight of Tiffin Columbian's losses have been by single digits. Maumee won both regular season meetings with Bowling Green. You often hear it said that it is difficult to beat a team three times in a season. Is it? Oak Harbor is improved



but still a year away.

Semifinals – Napoleon over Oak Harbor; Maumee over Bowling Green

Finals – Napoleon over Tiffin Columbian; Wauseon over Maumee

LAKE (BGSU DISTRICT): #2 Toledo Rogers, #3 Rossford, and #4 Toledo Central Catholic are the top seeds at Lake. Rogers is the wild card in the BG district. After a strong start, the Rams are only 2-7 since late January including losses to St. John's, Lima Senior, and St. Francis. Rogers passed up the bye and will play Scott in a sectional semifinal game. The Bulldogs have fallen on hard times finishing at the bottom of the TCL standings. Unless Scott adds a game during the final week of the regular season, the Bulldogs will be missing nine players suspended by the OHSAA for coming off the bench during an altercation in their game at Bowsher. With Rogers passing up the bye, Central Catholic grabbed it. The Irish have had an interesting season. Several players left the team during the season including the starting point guard transferring to St. John's the week after Central was drubbed by the Titans. Despite their record, the Irish could be dangerous on this side of the bracket. Central has won 7 straight sectional titles. Rossford is another team that started strong but has fallen off big time down the stretch. Woodward made the final four in the City League despite losing the regular season finale to Bowsher by 61 points

Semifinals – Toledo Rogers over Toledo Scott; Toledo Woodward over Fostoria

Finals – Toledo Rogers over Toledo Central Catholic; Toledo Woodward over Rossford

LIMA SENIOR (ONU DISTRICT): #2 Upper Sandusky and #3 Wapakoneta are the top seeds at Lima. Upper Sandusky heads into their regular season finale versus Colonel Crawford having won 45 straight regular season games. In addition to the Rams, the N10 consists of three D3 and five D4 teams. Their regular season schedule includes only three games against D2 teams with their best win coming against Shelby. Upper's three-year starting point guard Noah Dible is no longer with the team. Wapakoneta has a chance to win 20 games during the regular season. Their only losses to

Trail Trash

date have been against Minster and Ottawa-Glandorf in road games. An inconsistent Shawnee team will finish in the middle of the pack in the WBL while Kenton is having a solid year. The Wildcats were 2-22 last season. Defiance has shown improvement during the second half of the season. The Bulldogs start two freshmen. Bath will finish in the basement of the WBL.

Semifinals – Kenton over Lima Shawnee; Defiance over Lima Bath

Finals – Upper Sandusky over Kenton; Wapakoneta over Defiance

PAULDING (ONU DISTRICT): #1 Ottawa-Glandorf and #4 Elida are the top seeds at Paulding. O-G has clinched a tie for the WBL championship. The Titans have lost only to Findlay and Lima Senior. O-G graduated four starters from the 2016 regional runner-up. The Titans have won sectional titles the past 11 seasons. Elida has quietly put together a solid season. The Bulldogs were just eliminated from WBL title contention by O-G. A young Van Wert team has exceeded expectations and will finish in the middle of the WBL standings. Bryan trails Wauseon and Archbold in the NWOAL race. Celina is showing a little bit of life late in the season while St. Marys has had a rough last few weeks. Derek Jay became St. Marys' all-time leading scorer in late January. He has been sidelined with an injury since early February and his status for the tournament is unknown.

Semifinals – Celina over Bryan; Van Wert over St. Marys

Finals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Celina; Elida over Van Wert

GALION (MANSFIELD SENIOR DISTRICT): #2 Lexington, #3 Vermilion, and #4 Ontario are the top seeds at Galion. Lexington is on a four game losing streak heading into the final week of the regular season. One of those defeats was a one-point loss at Ottawa-Glandorf. In their first year in the SBC, Vermilion started out 13-1 before hitting the skids. The Sailors will now need help to get a piece of the SBC title. With Vermilion taking the bye, Ontario jumped on Vermilion's bracket. Ontario is 14-1 since mid-December with the only loss to Sandusky. Shelby is the sleeper. The Whippets are on a 6-1 streak heading into the final week of the regular season with the only loss to Ontario in overtime. Shelby matches up well with Sandusky. Norwalk has played through a ton of injuries this season. For Port Clinton, a 7th straight losing season since finishing as the D2 state runner-up to Dayton Dunbar in 2010.

Semifinals – Ontario over Port Clinton; Shelby over Norwalk

Finals – Ontario over Vermilion; Lexington over Shelby

WILLARD (MANSFIELD SENIOR DISTRICT): #1 Sandusky is the top seed at the Bob Haas Gymnasium. Sandusky is undefeated in the NOL heading into the final week of the regular season. The Blue Streaks lost December games to Ashland, Oberlin, and Elyria. Jayrese Williams became Sandusky's career scoring leader in December breaking the record previously held by Scott May. For you young whippersnappers, May was the top overall pick of the 1976 NBA draft and an Olympic gold medalist after leading Indiana to the national championship. Heading into the final week of the regular season, a surprising Huron team is on top in the SBC. Perkins can gain a share of the title with a win over the Tigers. Mansfield Madison is the sleeper at Willard. The Rams have been inconsistent. Bellevue will finish in the middle of the NOL. The Redmen are second only to Willard with eighteen NOL basketball championships.

Semifinals – Mansfield Madison over Sandusky Perkins; Bellevue over Clyde

Finals – Mansfield Madison over Huron; Sandusky over Bellevue

DISTRICTS

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: Napoleon won the district title in 2016.

Semifinals – Wauseon over Napoleon; Toledo Rogers over Toledo Woodward

Final – Wauseon over Toledo Rogers

OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY: Ottawa-Glandorf won the D2 district at ONU in 2016 marking their sixth straight district championship. That followed D3 district titles from 2011 through 2015.

Semifinals – Wapakoneta over Upper Sandusky; Ottawa-Glandorf over Elida

Final – Ottawa-Glandorf over Wapakoneta

MANSFIELD SENIOR: Lexington won the district championship in 2016 at Galion.

Semifinals – Ontario over Lexington; Sandusky over Mansfield Madison

Final – Sandusky over Ontario

DIVISION III

D3 tournament basketball around NW Ohio will look a bit different in 2017. That is probably an understatement. Lima Central Catholic was the favorite to win a state championship in 2016 and the T-Birds did just that in dominating fashion. That came on the heels of their state runner-up finish in 2015 and a state championship in 2014. Ottawa-Glandorf won a D3 state championship in 2013 after winning a regional title in 2012. With heavy graduation losses, LCC won't be returning to Columbus in 2017 while O-G moved back to D2 last season.

D3 teams from Northwest Ohio have flown under the radar statewide this season with only Wayne Trace receiving much notoriety. Liberty-Benton, Van Buren, Spencerville, Archbold, Genoa, and Eastwood have all put together solid seasons. Parity (unlike last year when the Swami called it parody) is the key word this tournament year in D3. Three of the districts look relatively even while the Norwalk district is clearly the weakest of the bunch.

St. Marys Memorial has replaced Van Wert as a sectional site. The Lima Senior district winner will meet the Norwalk district winner in one regional semifinal at BGSU while the Toledo Central Catholic district winner will meet the Napoleon district winner in the other regional semifinal at the Stroh Center. The regional final will be played at the University of Toledo. What the heck is going on? What we do know is there will be a D3 team from Northwest Ohio at the 2017 state tournament. The question is who gets there.

SECTIONALS

MONROEVILLE (NORWALK DISTRICT): #2 Edison and #4 Margaretta are the top seeds at Monroeville. A five-team sectional. Edison was swept by Margaretta during the regular season but has wins over top seeded New London and #3 seed Western Reserve. Edison's best win is against Vermilion starting the Sailors' skid. The Chargers own wins over the #1 and #3 seeds in the district. Margaretta should finish the regular season above .500 finishing in the top half of the SBC. The Polar Bears swept the season series with Edison. The remaining teams at Monroeville are below .500. Which is the bigger speed trap on Route 20? Monroeville or Woodville?

Semifinal – Ashland Crestview over Seneca East

Trail Trash

Finals – Margaretta over Ashland Crestview; Edison over Bucyrus

SHELBY (NORWALK DISTRICT): #1 New London and #3 Western Reserve are the top seeds at Shelby. Another five team sectional. New London leads the Firelands Conference heading into the final week of the regular season. Western Reserve can still get a share of the FC title. The Roughriders have played most of the season without sophomore Jaret Griffith, the 2016 FC player of the year. His status for the tournament is unknown. Clear Fork will be leaving the OCC at the end of the year to join Galion and Ontario in the MOAC. Willard's only wins have come against Bellevue, Hopewell-Loudon, and Port Clinton. The Flashes won twenty-five NOL basketball championships including fourteen between 1976 and 1993.

Semifinal – Clear Fork over Galion

Finals – New London over Clear Fork; Western Reserve over Willard

TOLEDO BOWSHER (TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC DISTRICT): #2 Eastwood and #3 Ottawa Hills are the top seeds at ELB. A five-team sectional. Eastwood is currently tied with Genoa for the NBC lead. The Eagles were swept by Genoa and also have a loss to Archbold. After a 2016 regional runner-up finish and with three starters returning, expectations were high at Ottawa Hills. Inconsistency and injuries have plagued the Green Bears. OH is typically a tough out in the tournament.



Swanton should finish in the top half of the NWOAL. Lake will finish near the bottom of the NBC. Northwood broke a thirty-eight game winless streak (76 games against OHSAA opponents) when the Rangers defeated Emmanuel Christian in late January.

Semifinal – Swanton over Lake

Finals – Swanton over Ottawa Hills; Eastwood over Northwood

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OAK HARBOR (TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC DISTRICT): #1 Genoa and #4 Cardinal Stritch are the top seeds at OH. Genoa is currently tied with Eastwood at the top of the NBC. The Comets have won eleven straight. Genoa dealt Wauseon their lone loss. Cardinal Stritch is an up and coming program. The Cardinals have some excellent sophomore and freshman talent. Evergreen is also very young typically starting two sophomores and two freshmen. The Vikings have been consistent. Evergreen has a quality win against D1 Anthony Wayne. Otsego should finish the regular season at .500. The Knights have been difficult to figure out this season. Both Gibsonburg and Woodmore will finish the regular season under .500. The semifinal games at Oak Harbor should be very competitive.

Semifinals – Otsego over Evergreen; Woodmore over Gibsonburg

Finals – Cardinal Stritch over Otsego; Genoa over Woodmore

DEFIANCE (NAPOLEON DISTRICT): #1 Liberty-Benton and #3 Van Buren are the top seeds at Defiance. Another five team sectional. Liberty-Benton has clinched at least a share of the BVC championship. The Eagles are 15-1 since early December losing only to Wapakoneta in that span. L-B's Andrew Masterlasco scored a school record 46 points against Van Buren in early January. Van Buren will finish no worse than runner-up in the BVC losing to L-B in overtime. The Black Knights' only other loss to date was at Marion Pleasant. Interesting that VB went to the L-B side of the bracket rather than the Archbold side. Montpelier finished in 3rd place in their first season back in the BBC. Two players topped 1,000 career points for the Locos this season in senior Michael Blake and junior Kolden Uribes. It was a bit of a surprise that Montpelier went to the Van Buren side of the bracket rather than the Elmwood side. Liberty Center will finish in the middle of the NWOAL. Veteran Paul Wayne has returned to coaching at Tinora playing the controlled style that was so successful at Holgate.

Semifinals – Montpelier over Tinora

Finals – Van Buren over Montpelier; Liberty-Benton over Liberty Center

WAUSEON (NAPOLEON DISTRICT): #2 Archbold and #4 Elmwood are the top seeds at Wauseon. Archbold should finish as the NWOAL runner-up with their only league loss being to Wauseon. The Blue Streaks start all underclassmen. All five of Archbold's losses have been by single digits including two in overtime. Elmwood has put together a solid season and will finish in the top half of

the NBC. The Royals' best win came against Genoa. Fairview has been competitive in a tough GMC as they move closer to the .500 mark. Patrick Henry is much improved from a year ago although the Patriots don't have the results in the NWOAL to show it. Paulding will finish under .500 in what has been viewed as a down year in the NWC. Delta will finish at the bottom of the NWOAL with their only regular season win coming against Swanton.

Semifinals – Paulding over Delta; Patrick Henry over Fairview

Finals – Archbold over Paulding; Elmwood over Patrick Henry

ST. MARYS (LIMA SENIOR DISTRICT): #2 Spencerville and #3 Marion Local are the top seeds at St. Marys. A five-team sectional. Spencerville went undefeated in winning the NWC. The Bearcats have won sectional titles the past six seasons. As usual, Marion Local got their season off to a late start due to football. The Flyers will finish no lower than a tie for 2nd in the MAC behind Versailles. Delphos Jefferson has a chance to finish the season at .500. The Wildcats have a quality late season win against D2 Elida. Lima Central Catholic returned only one player who played quality minutes on the 2016 state championship team. The T-Birds have won 7 straight sectional titles. Allen East returned a veteran team and was viewed as a possible contender in the NWC. The results have been disappointing although the Mustangs have a chance of finishing the regular season at .500. The sectional final games at St. Marys will be played on Saturday, March 4.

Semifinals – Delphos Jefferson over Lima Central Catholic

Finals – Spencerville over Delphos Jefferson; Marion Local over Allen East

ELIDA (LIMA SENIOR DISTRICT): #1 Wayne Trace and #4 Carey are the top seeds at the Elida Fieldhouse. Wayne Trace shares the GMC title with Ayersville and Holgate. The Raiders' two losses are by a combined three points to Napoleon and Ayersville. Ethan Linder of Wayne Trace recently went over 2,000 career points. Earlier in the season he became the all-time leading scorer at Wayne Trace and for Paulding County. Carey

Trail Trash

could finish as high as a tie for 2nd place in the N10 behind Upper Sandusky. Both #5 Coldwater and #6 Bluffton jumped on (I don't think they really jumped) Carey's bracket. Coldwater also had the usual late start due to football success. The Cavaliers will finish somewhere in the middle of the MAC pack. Bluffton has played well since mid-January. The Pirates will finish the regular season no worse than .500. A young Parkway team has shown improvement although still likely to finish at the bottom of the MAC.

Semifinals – Parkway over Riverdale; Coldwater over Bluffton

Finals – Wayne Trace over Parkway; Coldwater over Carey

DISTRICTS

NORWALK: Edison won their first district title in 2016.

Semifinals- Edison over Margaretta; Western Reserve over New London

Final – Edison over Western Reserve

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC: Ottawa Hills is the defending district champion.

Semifinals – Eastwood over Swanton; Genoa over Cardinal Stritch

Final – Genoa over Eastwood

NAPOLEON: Liberty-Benton won the district championship last season.

Semifinals- Van Buren over Liberty-Benton; Archbold over Elmwood

Final – Archbold over Van Buren

LIMA SENIOR: Lima Central Catholic won their fifth straight district championship in 2016.

Semifinals – Marion Local over Spencerville; Wayne Trace over Coldwater

Final – Wayne Trace over Marion Local

DIVISION IV

Mansfield St. Peter's, Ayersville, and Hilltop are all in the top ten in the Associated Press D4 poll with Holgate and Old Fort also getting some love. There are several other

D4 teams from Northwest Ohio that can make plenty of noise in the 2017 tournament.

The Napoleon district appears to be the strongest of the bunch with Ayersville, Hilltop, Holgate, and Toledo Christian plus several teams capable of pulling an upset. The Elida district has the most balance from top to bottom. Delphos St. John's will be a tough out in the tournament. 2016 regional runner-up Mansfield St. Peter's is the clear cut favorite in the Willard district. The Liberty-Benton district is again the weakest of the D4 districts. Teams from the MAC have typically dominated the Wapakoneta district, but Lima Perry was able to break through last season. The Commodores are strong again in 2017.

Lakota has replaced Findlay as a sectional site. The Willard district winner will meet Liberty-Benton district winner in one regional semi-final at Bowling Green while the Napoleon district winner will meet the Elida district winner in the other regional semi-final at BG. The regional final will be played at the University of Toledo. That's blasphemy. No bias here. The Wapakoneta district winner will again travel south to play one of the Dayton district winners (Russia, Fort Loramie) in a regional semifinal at Kettering Fairmont. The other two Dayton district winners (South Charleston Southeastern, Tri-Village, Sidney Fairlawn, Cincinnati Christian) will play in the other regional semifinal at Kettering.

SECTIONALS

SANDUSKY (WILLARD DISTRICT): #2 Colonel Crawford and #3 Norwalk St. Paul are the top seeds at Sandusky. Colonel Crawford will finish no worse than a tie for 2nd place in the N10. The Eagles are undefeated against D4 teams although the sample size is small. Norwalk St. Paul can still get a share of the Firelands Conference title but the Flyers will need help. St. Paul is also undefeated against D4 schools. Lucas is wrapping up their first winning season since 2007. The Cubs finished in a tie for 2nd behind Mansfield St. Peter's in the MBC. Sandusky St. Mary started the season 9-3 before injuries and illness took their toll. Buckeye Central is in the middle of the N10 standings. The Bucks' seven-point loss to Upper Sandusky is the closest anyone has come to the Rams. Plymouth is near the bottom of the FC standings but has a win over Buckeye Central.

Semifinals – Sandusky St. Mary over Lucas; Buckeye Central over Plymouth

Finals – Colonel Crawford over Sandusky St. Mary; Norwalk St. Paul over Buckeye Central

LEXINGTON (WILLARD DISTRICT): #1 Mansfield St. Peter's and #4 South Central are the top seeds at Lex. Mansfield St. Peter's returned three starters and their top sub from the 2016 regional runner-up. The MBC champions enter tournament play at 20-2 with losses to Ontario and Canton Central Catholic. The Spartans have wins over Ashland, Shelby, and Mansfield Senior. Sparty passed on the bye and will open with Danbury followed by Monroeville. South Central has put together a solid season and will finish in the top half of the Firelands standings. Wynford will finish the regular season no worse than .500. The Royals have a quality win over D3 New London. Mansfield Christian is very young while Crestline finishes in the basement of the MBC.

Semifinals – Mansfield St. Peter's over Danbury; South Central over Crestline; Wynford over Mansfield Christian

Finals – Mansfield St. Peter's over Monroeville; South Central over Wynford

SWANTON (NAPOLEON DISTRICT): #3 Holgate and #4 Toledo Christian are the top seeds at Swanton. Holgate finished in a tie with Ayersville and Wayne Trace for the GMC title. The Tigers handed Ayersville their only loss. Toledo Christian went undefeated in winning the TAAC. TC's losses are to Liberty-Benton in overtime, Bowsher, Ayersville, and Swanton. Maumee Valley Country starts all underclassmen including two freshmen. One of those freshmen, Zeb Jackson, leads the TAAC in scoring. Jackson scored 49 against Parkway back in December. Edgerton will finish the regular season no worse than .500. The Bulldogs have won sectional titles the past seven seasons. Pettisville, the runner-up in the BBC, will also finish the regular season no worse than .500. The Blackbirds have played a strong non-league schedule that includes Archbold, Wauseon, and Ayersville. Fayette is the only team at Swanton with a losing record. This is a very good D4 sectional.

Semifinals – Maumee Valley Country Day over Edgerton; Pettisville over Fayette

Finals – Toledo Christian over Maumee Country Day; Holgate over Pettisville

BRYAN (NAPOLEON DISTRICT): #1 Ayersville and #2 Hilltop are the top seeds at the new gym in Bryan. As

Trail Trash

you may have read, Ayersville finished tied atop the GMC standings along with Wayne Trace and Holgate who handed the Aces their only loss. Rather than taking a bye and going to Swanton, Hilltop opted for the trip to Bryan and Ayersville's side of the bracket. Not sure what the thought process was. The BBC champion Cadets are currently on a sixteen game winning streak after absorbing their only loss of the season to Ayersville in mid-December. Quinn Smith became Hilltop's career scoring leader back in January. #5 Hicksville passed up the #3 and #4 seeds to get a shot at Hilltop assuming both can advance to the sectional finals. The Aces put together a solid season finishing in the top half of the GMC. The bottom four seeds in the district round things out at Bryan.

Semifinals – Stryker over North Central; Hicksville over Edon; Hilltop over Toledo Emmanuel Christian

Finals – Ayersville over Stryker; Hilltop over Hicksville

VAN WERT (ELIDA DISTRICT): #2 Convoy Crestview and #3 Miller City are the top seeds at VW. Expectations were high for a young Crestview team going into the season. The Knights have only one loss by more than three points. Miller City still has a shot at winning a share of the PCL but will need help. The Wildcats have stumbled a bit in February. Kalida will finish the regular season under .500 in Ryan Stechschulte's first season following the retirement of the legendary Dick Kortokrax. The Wildcats had a strong January but have stumbled down the stretch. Lincolnview brought back limited experience from their 2016 D4 state runner-up team. The Lancers have been competitive. Antwerp finishes near the bottom of the GMC while Fort Jennings will finish in the basement of the PCL. Both teams have been competitive outside of league play. The sectional final games at Van Wert will be played on Saturday, March 4.

Semifinals – Kalida over Fort Jennings; Lincolnview over Antwerp

Finals – Kalida over Miller City; Crestview over Lincolnview

OTTAWA-GLANDORF (ELIDA DISTRICT): #1 Delphos St. John's and #4 Pandora-Gilboa are the top seeds at O-G. Delphos St. John's is 12-1 during the 2017 portion of

Trail Trash

their schedule losing only to Marion Local. The Blue Jays still have a shot at sharing the runner-up spot in the MAC. Delphos is 4-0 against WBL teams. Pandora-Gilboa is one of the most improved teams around. The Rockets have clinched at least a share of the PCL title and could finish as high as 3rd in the BVC. Look out for P-G next season. Continental is having a solid season. The Pirates could get a share of the PCL title. Leipsic has thirteen wins entering the final week of the regular season. The Vikings trail only Liberty-Benton and Van Buren in the BVC. Cory-Rawson should finish the regular season above .500. The Hornets will finish in the top half of the BVC. Like Cory-Rawson, Columbus Grove is finishing the regular season strong. Ottoville started strong but will finish the regular season losing ten of their last eleven games. This is a very good sectional.

Semifinals – Columbus Grove over Cory-Rawson; Pandora-Gilboa over Ottoville; Continental over Leipsic

Finals – Delphos St. John's over Columbus Grove; Continental over Pandora-Gilboa

RIVERDALE (LIBERTY-BENTON DISTRICT): #2 Hopewell-Loudon and #3 New Riegel are the top seeds at Riverdale. Hopewell-Loudon started the season 10-1 including a win over Old Fort before fading. The Chieftains will finish the regular season above .500, but in the lower half of the BVC. New Riegel will finish no worse than tied for the runner-up spot in the SBC River. The Blue Jackets were competitive in their early season game with Upper Sandusky. North Baltimore still has a shot at finishing the regular season at or above .500. The Tigers are currently tied with Hopewell-Loudon in the BVC standings. Vanlue broke a thirty-nine game losing streak with a January win over Hardin Northern. The 'Lue has added a couple of wins since then. Mohawk has shown some improvement while Fostoria St. Wendelin is currently at the bottom of the SBC River standings. This isn't a strong sectional.

Semifinals – North Baltimore over Vanlue; Mohawk over Fostoria St. Wendelin

Finals – New Riegel over North Baltimore; Hopewell-Loudon over Mohawk

LAKOTA (LIBERTY-BENTON DISTRICT): #1 Old Fort and #4 Arlington are top seeds at Lakota. Old Fort is the SBC River champion. The Stockaders have dropped games to Genoa, Sandusky St. Mary, and Hopewell-Loudon. Arlington will finish in the upper half of the BVC standings. The Red Devils are at .500 overall heading into the final week of the regular season. In a surprise move, Tiffin Calvert passed up the lower seeds and

jumped on Old Fort's bracket. Calvert and Fremont St. Joseph are in the middle of the SBC River standings. Lakota broke a thirty game losing streak with a win over Calvert in December. That was first of four Raider wins during the month. Lakota has yet to win during the 2017 portion of their schedule. The St. Joe's/Lakota semifinal game has been moved to Riverdale. McComb suffered heavy losses from their 2016 district championship team. Same as the Riverdale sectional.

Semifinals – Tiffin Calvert over McComb; Arlington over Arcadia; Fremont St. Joseph over Lakota

Finals – Old Fort over Tiffin Calvert; Arlington over Fremont St. Joseph

ALLEN EAST (WAPAKONETA DISTRICT): #1 Lima Perry is the top seed at Allen East. Perry dominated the competition in winning the NWCC title. The high scoring (around 80 ppg) Commodores lost three in a row in late December to WBL members Shawnee, Van Wert, and Van Wert. The next three seeds decided to head to Coldwater for the sectional. Minster is another MAC team that got a late start due to football. The Wildcats have been inconsistent but have wins over Wapak and Marion Local. Minster is the sleeper in this district. Lima Temple Christian can finish the regular season at .500. New Knoxville is 1-12 since early January with the only win a triple overtime affair against Temple Christian. Ridgemont and Hardin-Northern finished at the bottom of the NWCC.

Semifinals – Ridgemont over Hardin-Northern; New Knoxville over Lima Temple Christian

Finals – Lima Perry over Ridgemont; Minster over New Knoxville

COLDWATER (WAPAKONETA DISTRICT): #2 Fort Recovery, #3 Upper Scioto Valley, and #4 St. Henry are top seeds at the Palace. Heading into the season, it appeared that Fort Recovery could challenge Versailles (D3/Southwest District) for the MAC title. The Indians had a tough stretch from mid January to early February losing six of eight games. USV finished as the NWCC runner-up but the Rams were only 2-7 to finish the regular season following a strong start. St. Henry jumped on USV's bracket. Other than a six game winning streak in January, the Redskins have been inconsistent.

Ada will finish at the bottom of the NWC. New Bremen's only win came against New Knoxville in late January. Waynesfield-Goshen's only wins to date have come against NWCC foes Ridgmont and Hardin Northern.

Semifinals – St. Henry over Waynesfield-Goshen; New Bremen over Ada

Finals – St. Henry over Upper Scioto Valley; Fort Recovery over New Bremen

Trail Trash

The Swami will return with a very abbreviated version for the regional and state tournaments. All facts, fiction, and opinions are those of the Swami. Brackets are courtesy of davey1.com and Mr. David Spengler. Hope to see you along the tournament trail. Rock on.

DISTRICTS

WILLARD: Mansfield St. Peter's is the defending district champion.

Semifinals – Colonel Crawford over Norwalk St. Paul; Mansfield St. Peter's over South Central

Final – Mansfield St. Peter's over Colonel Crawford

NAPOLEON: Fayette won the district championship in 2016.

Semifinals – Toledo Christian over Holgate; Ayersville over Hilltop

Final – Ayersville over Toledo Christian

ELIDA: Lincolnview won the district title last season.

Semifinals – Crestview over Kalida; Delphos St. John's over Continental

Final – Delphos St. John's over Crestview

LIBERTY-BENTON: McComb was the district champion in 2016.

Semifinals – New Riegel over Hopewell-Loudon; Old Fort over Arlington

Final – Old Fort over New Riegel

WAPAKONETA: Lima Perry won their first district title in 2016.

Semifinals – Lima Perry over Minster; Fort Recovery over St. Henry

Final – Lima Perry over Fort Recovery

As I finish this up, I recall a line from a Pink Floyd song (at least I think it was Pink Floyd). Is there anybody out there?