

# Trail Trash

## 2020 OHSAA Boys High School Basketball Tournament

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Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

# The Swami

Welcome to Trail Trash and the Swami. 2020 marks the twenty-seventh year for this esteemed publication. If anyone back in 1994 had predicted that we would still be writing this nonsense today, I would have called them crazy. Or worse.

In August, the OHSAA announced that the 2021 boys state basketball tournament would return to St. John's Arena after twenty-two years at the Schottenstein Center. I applaud the move and look forward to going back to St. John's although I do not share the widely held belief that the move will "fix" the state tournament. Sitting in the floor seats, the lower mezzanine, and the corner seats just above the scoreboards sounds great, but I have no desire in going back to the balcony or the upper mezzanine seats underneath the overhang. I do not dislike the Schott (other than the cup holder that is permanently imbedded in my left knee) and enjoy the amenities that it offers. It will be interesting to see what transpires for 2022. Will the tournament stay at St. John's Arena, go back to the Schott, or head to another venue? Stay tuned.

Heading into the tournament draw, the Swami saw questions and comments on the process and why it is not consistent across districts around the state. OHSAA Commissioner Jerry Snodgrass recently tweeted that work is being done toward adopting policies that will have all

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tournaments conducted in the same manner. While not sure what that would entail, the Swami strongly believes that tournament basketball in the Northwest District is the best of any of the six districts around Ohio. In the Swami's opinion, it would be a sad day if the Northwest District were to go to NCAA style bracketing and do away with neutral sites for sectional tournaments. Issue 2020-1

Is there any way that the brackets published by the OHSAA can reflect when and where there are split sessions for sectional and district tournament games? Maybe include that with the game times? Maybe it is on the brackets, but the print is too small to read.

Fifty years ago marked the final season with the OHSAA having just two divisions (Class AA and Class A). District champions for 1970 in Class AA were Lima Senior, Rossford, and Tiffin Columbian while Bluffton, Mansfield St. Peter's, Pettisville, and St. Henry won district championships in Class A. Elyria joined the three Northwest Ohio representatives in Class AA for the regional tournament. The regional semifinals in Class A

**Since 1994, Trail Trash** has been published twice annually in conjunction with the boys state basketball tournament. Trail Trash is published to share 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.

were on a Thursday night at BGSU's Anderson Arena and the University of Toledo's Field House. The Class AA semifinals were on Friday night and split between the same venues. The regional championship games were held Saturday at Anderson Arena.

The Swami has cleaned the cobwebs off the Ouija board and hopefully out of his head. Time to go to the predictions.

## ***DIVISION I***

All nineteen D1 teams were seeded and then assigned to one of two districts based on whatever line on the brackets a team chose at the tournament draw. With the majority of the teams from the Toledo area, the University of Toledo will again host the two D1 district tournaments.

Eleven of the nineteen teams were above .500 at the time of the draw with Lima Senior the top D1 team in Northwest Ohio. Perrysburg and Toledo Start have put together solid seasons while Sylvania Southview has exceeded expectations. Toledo Central Catholic, Toledo St. Francis, Findlay, and Toledo St. John's Jesuit have been in a battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the TRAC behind Lima. In District 1, there are five teams with a shot at the title while Lima Senior is the heavy favorite in District 2. Toledo Rogers would have been a strong contender for a district title in D1, but Rogers dropped down to D2 along with Toledo Woodward.

The winners from the district tournaments at the University of Toledo will meet in a regional semifinal at Savage Arena. The other regional semifinal will match district winners from Lakewood (Lakewood St. Edward, Cleveland St. Ignatius, Cleveland Rhodes) and Elyria Catholic (Lorain, Grafton Midview, Amherst Steele) at the University of Akron. Akron? The regional final is slated for the University of Toledo. Lakewood St. Edward is the regional favorite heading into the tournament.

## ***SECTIONALS***

ROSSFORD (UT DISTRICT 1): #2 Toledo Start and #7 Findlay are top seeds in the brand new gym at Rossford. The gym opened at the end of January and is really really nice. At least that is not in all caps. Start finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the City League standings to Rogers after being swept by the Rams. Start will face Rogers for a third time in the finals of the City League playoffs. Findlay lost by a point at Start in their regular season matchup. With their youth, the Trojans should have a very strong team in 2021. Toledo Bowsher qualified for the City League playoffs by finishing in 3<sup>rd</sup> place with the Rebels facing Start in the semifinals. Clay's size could cause some problems for Start.

Semifinal – Toledo Bowsher over Bowling Green

Finals – Findlay over Toledo Bowsher; Toledo Start over Clay

TOLEDO START (UT DISTRICT 1): #3 Perrysburg and #4 Toledo Central Catholic are top seeds at Roy C. Perrysburg is the NLL champion. The Yellow Jackets started the season with ten straight wins before losses at Wauseon, to Northview in overtime, and at Start. A veteran Central Catholic team got off to their usual late start. Central is one of the toughest teams to figure out in the district. Anthony Wayne is currently tied with Southview for the runner-up spot in the NLL. The Generals are the sleeper in the district. Central and AW is an excellent sectional final. Coming off last year's 23-1 season, a rebuilding Northview team should finish above .500. Mansfield Madison has a long trip.

Semifinal – Sylvania Northview over Mansfield Madison

Finals – Perrysburg over Sylvania Northview; Toledo Central Catholic over Anthony Wayne

GENOA (UT DISTRICT 2): #5 Sylvania Southview, #6 Toledo St. Francis, and #8 Toledo St. John's Jesuit are top seeds at Genoa with the sectional final games on Saturday afternoon. A young Southview team has overachieved. The Cougars are currently tied with Anthony Wayne for the runner-up spot in the NLL. St. Francis chose a first round game for a chance to meet Southview in a sectional final. The Knights blew out the Cougars in their regular season game. St. Francis has been pretty good when having all their pieces. This isn't the St. John's of old although the Titans still have a shot at a share of 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the TRAC. Coach Mike Schoen is in his first year directing SJJ following the retirement of Ed Heintschel after 40 years as head coach. Springfield is really difficult to figure out although the Blue Devils still have a shot at finishing above .500.

Semifinal – Toledo St. Francis over Toledo Whitmer

Finals – Toledo St. Francis over Sylvania Southview; Toledo St. John's Jesuit over Springfield

FOSTORIA (UT DISTRICT 2): #1 Lima Senior is the top seed at Fostoria. A four team sectional with games scheduled for Saturday afternoon. Lima Senior has clinched the TRAC championship. Lima's losses have come at the hands of state-ranked teams (Canton McKinley, Ottawa-Glandorf, Lima Shawnee). Josiah Fulcher is a BGSU commit. A key for the Spartans in the tournament will be the availability of second-leading scorer and top rebounder Jamir

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Simpson. The Spartans recently scored a school record 122 points (101 through 3 quarters) against Fremont Ross. Once Lima went on the board at Fostoria, other teams had little desire to follow. Ashland and Fremont Ross is a toss-up.

Finals – Ashland over Fremont Ross; Lima Senior over Toledo Waite

## DISTRICTS

The winners of the two districts at UT will meet in a regional semifinal at Savage Arena. Toledo Start and Lima Senior won district championships in 2019. For Start, it was the first district championship in school history.

### UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO (DISTRICT 1):

Semifinals – Toledo Start over Findlay; Toledo Central Catholic over Perrysburg

Final – Toledo Start over Toledo Central Catholic

### UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO (DISTRICT 2):

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

Final – Lima Senior over Toledo St. Francis

## DIVISION II

For the first time since 2017, D2 will feature three districts with Lake as the new district tournament site. Toledo Rogers and Toledo Woodward moved down from D2 while Huron, Oak Harbor, Rossford, and Upper Sandusky moved up from D3.

Lima Shawnee, Toledo Rogers, and Sandusky are the top teams in D2. Shawnee, the 2019 regional runner-up, is the top ranked D2 team in the state according to the Associated Press. Rogers was a fixture in the top five until their late season loss to Sandusky. Sandusky ran off seventeen straight wins to start the season but received minimal interest in the polls until their late season win over Rogers vaulted the Blue Streaks into the top ten and a tie with the Rams in the final poll.

Shawnee is the favorite to win the Ohio Northern district while Rogers and Sandusky are the favorites in the Lake district. The Mansfield Madison district appears to be the weakest district of the three but likely the most competitive. Each of the three districts had six teams with winning records at the time of the draw.

The winner of the district at Mansfield Madison will take on the district winner from Ohio Northern in one regional

semifinal at Bowling Green with the district winner from Lake taking on the district winner from North Ridgeville (Cleveland Central Catholic, Parma Heights Holy Name) in the other semifinal game. With the addition of the third district in Northwest Ohio, one of the winners from the Central District moves to the regional at Ohio University. There is an excellent chance that Northwest Ohio will have a D2 team in Columbus.

## SECTIONALS

BUCYRUS (MANSFIELD MADISON DISTRICT): #1 Upper Sandusky is the top seed at Bucyrus. Upper Sandusky is the N10 champion. The Rams have not lost since their season opener against Willard. Upper only plays five D2 teams with the remainder of the schedule consisting of D3 and D4 squads. Ontario finishes as the runner-up to Shelby in the MOAC. Lexington has been inconsistent but will finish in 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind D1 Wooster in the OCC. Ontario and Lex makes for a good sectional final. Mansfield Senior will likely finish the regular season under .500, but the Tygers are the sleeper in the district. After getting off to a late start following a state runner-up finish in football, the Tygers have faced a very competitive schedule.

Semifinals – Mansfield Senior over Vermilion

Finals – Upper Sandusky over Mansfield Senior; Lexington over Ontario

WILLARD (MANSFIELD MADISON DISTRICT): #2 Huron, #3 Shelby, and #4 Norwalk are top seeds at Bob Haas. Huron will finish in 3<sup>rd</sup> place behind Willard and Oak Harbor in the SBC Bay after a couple of late season losses. Shelby ran the table to become the MOAC champion. That marks the first outright league championship for the Whippets since their 1999 Northern Ohio League title. Defending district champion Norwalk passed on a bye to set up a likely sectional final against Huron. The Truckers are tied with Sandusky for the lead in the SBC Lake heading into the final weekend of the season. Norwalk handed Sandusky their only loss of the season. Clear Fork is really scuffling as the regular season comes to an end.

Semifinals – Norwalk over Edison; Clear Fork over Galion

Finals – Norwalk over Huron; Shelby over Clear Fork

PAULDING (ONU DISTRICT): #2 St. Marys and #3



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Defiance are top seeds at Paulding. With the return of Dan Hegemier to the coaching ranks, St. Marys has put together an outstanding season. The Roughriders trail only Shawnee and Ottawa-Glandorf in the WBL after going 6-16 a year ago. Defiance is trying to finish in the top half of the WBL. St. Marys and Defiance will meet on the final Friday of the regular season in what could be a district semifinal preview. A big Bryan team was expected to be a contender in the NWOAL but back-to-back losses to Wauseon and Archbold dashed their title hopes. Van Wert and Wapakoneta are middle of the pack WBL teams with Wapak having a win over Defiance.

Semifinals – Van Wert over Wapakoneta

Finals – Defiance over Van Wert; St. Marys over Bryan

LIMA SENIOR (ONU DISTRICT): #1 Lima Shawnee and #4 Wauseon are top seeds at Lima Senior. Undefeated Shawnee has clinched at least a share of the WBL title. The Indians returned two starters and other key personnel from their 2019 regional runner-up. Consecutive wins over Lima Senior, Ottawa-Glandorf, and Findlay erased any doubts about Shawnee. Wauseon is having a typical solid season, but will likely finish in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the NWOAL. Kenton will finish in the top half of the WBL. The Wildcats had not finished above .500 in league play since 2007-2008. Kenton and Elida will meet on the final Friday of the regular season with their sectional semifinal the following Tuesday.

Semifinals – Napoleon over Celina; Kenton over Elida

Finals – Lima Shawnee over Napoleon; Wauseon over Kenton

TOLEDO BOWSHER (LAKE DISTRICT: #1 Toledo Rogers is the top seed at ELB. Expectations were sky high for Rogers with the return of several starters plus the addition of junior transfers Jamiya Neal (St. Francis) and Steve Coleman (Maumee Valley Country Day). Rogers finished at the top of the City League standings and will face Start in the finals of the City League playoffs. The only losses for the Rams have been to D1's Lima Senior and Cincinnati St. Xavier along with Sandusky. Rogers recently lost point guard Ketaan Wyatt to a season-ending injury. A young Tiffin Columbian team is the next highest seed at Bowsher. The Tornadoes are having their best season since 2009-2010 and in a battle with Clyde for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the SBC Lake. Clyde got a late start after winning a D4 state football championship.

Semifinals – Toledo Scott over Maumee; Clyde over Port Clinton

Finals – Toledo Rogers over Toledo Scott; Clyde over Tiffin Columbian

GENOA (LAKE DISTRICT): #2 Sandusky, #3 Rossford, and #4 Oak Harbor are top seeds at Genoa. Once Rogers got on the bracket at Bowsher, the next three seeds all headed for Genoa. Sandusky started the season 17-0 before losing to Norwalk, but bounced back with a statement win over Rogers. The Blue Streaks have clinched at least a tie for the SBC Lake championship. Sandusky's Tahj Staveskie scored 52 points in a win over Lexington. Rossford is the NBC champion. The only losses on the season for the Bulldogs are to D3 Johnstown-Monroe, Rogers, and Genoa. Oak Harbor will likely share the SBC Bay title with Willard. Oak Harbor and Rossford would make for a good sectional final although the Rockets cannot look past Toledo Woodward.

Semifinals – Oak Harbor over Toledo Woodward; Perkins over Bellevue

Finals – Oak Harbor over Rossford; Sandusky over Perkins

## ***DISTRICTS***

The ONU district winner will meet the Mansfield Madison district winner and the Lake district winner will face the North Ridgeville district winner in regional semifinal games at BGSU.

MANSFIELD MADISON: Norwalk won the district at Madison in 2019.

Semifinals – Upper Sandusky over Lexington; Norwalk over Shelby

Final – Norwalk over Upper Sandusky

OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY: Lima Shawnee won the district championship at Ada in 2019.

Semifinals – St. Marys over Defiance; Lima Shawnee over Wauseon

Final – Lima Shawnee over St. Marys

LAKE: Northwest Ohio last had three D2 districts back in 2017.

Semifinals – Toledo Rogers over Clyde; Sandusky over Oak Harbor

Final – Toledo Rogers over Sandusky

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## DIVISION III

Twenty of the thirty-nine teams in D3 were above .500 at the time of the draw. That is an increase from last year when fewer than half the D3 teams entered the tournament with winning records. That being said, it just does not seem that D3 as a whole is as strong as a year ago. Several teams (Huron, Oak Harbor, Rossford, Upper Sandusky) that are having excellent seasons moved up to D2. That might be the reason, or maybe the Swami has no clue what he is talking about.

The Toledo Central Catholic district has Evergreen, Archbold, and Cardinal Stritch as the top teams and district favorites. Evergreen disappeared from the Associated Press poll for a week (not uncommon for schools from Northwest Ohio) but has been among those receiving votes the other weeks.

In the Norwalk district, Willard is the favorite. Willard has been a weekly fixture in the top ten of the Associated Press poll. The question is how well do teams like Western Reserve and Colonel Crawford match up with the Flashes. Colonel Crawford has moved up from D4.

The Lima Senior district is Ottawa-Glandorf. Second ranked O-G has been a top five team all season according to the AP. In 2019, O-G and Archbold were the headliners at Lima before Coldwater beat them both. Can any team in this year's Lima Senior district accomplish what Coldwater did last year?

The winner of the district at Toledo Central Catholic will take on the winner of one of the Columbus districts (Richwood North Union, Columbus Bishop Ready, Columbus Africentric) in a regional semifinal at BGSU. The top two seeds in Columbus (Canal Winchester Harvest Prep and Worthington Christian) both chose the path that will take that district winner to the regional at Ohio University. Interesting. District winners from Norwalk and Lima Senior will meet in the other regional semifinal at BG. Heading into the tournament, Ottawa-Glandorf is the favorite to win the regional and represent Northwest Ohio in Columbus.

## SECTIONALS

SPRINGFIELD (TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC DISTRICT): #1 Evergreen and #3 Cardinal Stritch are the top seeds at Springfield. This is a new site for 2020. Evergreen has clinched a share of the NWOAL. That is Evergreen's first NWOAL title since 2009 and only the third in school history. The lone loss for the Vikings was back in early December in the non-league matchup with Swanton. Cardinal Stritch returns two starters from last year's team that advanced to Columbus before losing to Cleveland Heights Lutheran East. Stritch currently trails Toledo

Christian in the TAAC. Joey Holifield of Cardinal Stritch is an Oakland commit. The Cardinals went to Evergreen's side of the bracket in a bit of a surprise. Interesting. Van Buren will finish in the top half of the BVC.

Semifinals – Van Buren over Otsego; Cardinal Stritch over Northwood; Delta over Lake

Finals – Evergreen over Van Buren; Cardinal Stritch over Delta

WAUSEON (TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC DISTRICT): #2 Archbold and #4 Ottawa Hills are the top seeds at Wauseon. Archbold should finish as the NWOAL runner-up to Evergreen. The Blue Streaks are doing it with defense giving up less than thirty-eight points per game. Ottawa Hills moved up from D4 and has exceeded expectations. The Green Bears are currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the TAAC and have a win over Stritch. Is that why Stritch went to the same side of the bracket as Evergreen? Liberty Center should finish the season over .500. Genoa turned things around beginning in mid-January and will finish in the top half of the NBC. The Comets handed Rossford their lone NBC loss. Swanton has only two wins since the beginning of 2020 following a promising start.

Semifinals – Swanton over Montpelier; Genoa over Liberty Center

Finals – Archbold over Swanton; Genoa over Ottawa Hills

HOPEWELL-LOUDON (NORWALK DISTRICT): #1 Willard and #3 Colonel Crawford are top seeds at HL. Willard returns three starters from the 2019 district championship team that lost to Coldwater in the regional semifinals. The Flashes will likely share the SBC Bay title with Oak Harbor. Colonel Crawford has wrapped up 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the N10 behind Upper Sandusky. The Eagles have won eight straight sectional titles and were the D4 district runner-up at Willard the past three seasons. With Crawford going to Willard's side of the bracket, a Sheldon versus Sheldon (Western Reserve) matchup would not happen until the district finals. Elmwood is the next highest seed at H-L with Eastwood, Wynford, Fostoria, and Margareta all heading to Monroeville.



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Semifinals – Ashland Crestview over Bucyrus; Colonel

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Crawford over Lakota; Elmwood over Woodmore

Finals – Willard over Ashland Crestview; Colonel Crawford over Elmwood

MONROEVILLE (NORWALK DISTRICT): #2 Western Reserve and #4 Eastwood are top seeds at Monroeville. Western Reserve is tied with Norwalk St. Paul and South Central for the Firelands Conference lead heading into the final weekend of the season. Western has just one loss since the beginning of 2020. The bottom of the bracket is interesting with Eastwood, Wynford, and Fostoria. Eastwood's best win came at Archbold in December. Eastwood trails Rossford and Fostoria in the NBC standings. Fostoria will have their first winning season since 2007-2008. Wynford will finish in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the N10 behind Upper Sandusky and Colonel Crawford. Margaretta has been hindered by injuries. The Polar Bears handed Willard their first loss of the season.

Semifinals – Margaretta over Seneca East; Fostoria over Wynford

Finals – Western Reserve over Margaretta; Eastwood over Fostoria

MILLER CITY (LIMA SENIOR DISTRICT): #1 Ottawa-Glandorf and #4 Riverdale are the top seeds at MC. Ottawa-Glandorf trails Lima Shawnee in the WBL. The Indians handed O-G their only loss. The Titans have won sectional titles the past fourteen seasons. Riverdale has clinched at least a share of the BVC title. That is Riverdale's first conference championship since 1973-1974 when the Falcons shared the North Central Conference title with Marion Pleasant. Liberty-Benton is currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the BVC. The Eagles have bounced back from back-to-back losing seasons. Tinora finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the GMC. Coldwater had heavy graduation losses and sits mid-pack in the MAC. Riverdale moved up from D4 while Lima Bath moved down from D2.

Semifinals – Lima Bath over Allen East; Coldwater over Liberty-Benton; Riverdale over Tinora

Finals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Lima Bath; Coldwater over Riverdale

ELIDA (LIMA SENIOR DISTRICT): #2 Bluffton and #3 Wayne Trace are the top seeds at Elida. Bluffton is currently tied for the runner-up spot in the NWC behind Columbus Grove. The Pirates gave Ottawa-Glandorf all they could handle in early January. Bluffton has since hit some bumps in the road and run into some injury issues. So is Bluffton a legitimate contender for the district championship or not? Wayne Trace finished as the runner-up in the GMC to Antwerp. The Raiders have won six straight sectional titles.

Wayne Trace and Lima Central Catholic moved up from D4. LCC is having a solid season and has to be considered a sleeper in the district.

Semifinals – Fairview over Delphos Jefferson; Lima Central Catholic over Paulding

Finals – Wayne Trace over Fairview; Lima Central Catholic over Bluffton

## DISTRICTS

The Toledo Central Catholic district winner will meet the winner of one of the Columbus district winners and the Norwalk district winner will face the Lima Senior district winner in regional semifinal games at BGSU.

TOLEDO CENTRAL CATHOLIC: Cardinal Stritch took home the district title in 2019 with a win over Genoa in double overtime.

Semifinals – Cardinal Stritch over Evergreen; Archbold over Genoa

Final – Cardinal Stritch over Archbold

NORWALK: Willard won the district championship at Norwalk last season.

Semifinals – Willard over Colonel Crawford; Western Reserve over Eastwood

Final – Willard over Western Reserve

LIMA SENIOR: Coldwater won the district championship in 2019 with wins over Archbold and Ottawa-Glandorf.

Semifinals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Coldwater; Wayne Trace over Lima Central Catholic

Finals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Wayne Trace

## DIVISION IV

With a decrease in the number of D4 teams in Northwest Ohio for 2020, there will be five districts rather than the six districts we saw in 2018 and 2019. In previous years with five districts, the Willard district winner would head west to play in the regional at BGSU with the Wapakoneta district winner heading south. For 2020, the Wapak district winner will head north for the regional at the Stroh Center joining

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district winners from Defiance, Elida, and Findlay. The winner of the Willard district heads to Canton for their regional.

Lucas is the top seed in the Willard district. The Cubs were nowhere to be found in the initial Associated Press poll but have been a fixture in the top ten ever since. South Central spent a week in the top ten followed by several weeks of receiving votes but has since disappeared. Norwalk St. Paul was the state's top ranked D4 team for a couple weeks before fading. Six of the thirteen teams in the Willard district were above .500 at the draw. Danbury and Mohawk came over from the Fostoria district while New London dropped down from D3. The winner of the Willard district will play the winner of the Struthers district (McDonald, Salineville Southern) in a regional semifinal at the Canton Fieldhouse with the winner of the Norton district (Richmond Heights, Mogadore) meeting the winner of the Orwell district (Bristolville Bristol, Willoughby Andrews Osborne) in the other semifinal. Richmond Heights is a prohibitive favorite.

Defiance will be hosting the district tournament formerly held at Napoleon with the Grand Canyon becoming a sectional site. The gym at Defiance is the best in Northwest Ohio. Six of the fourteen teams assigned to Defiance were above .500 at the draw. Undefeated Antwerp made a steady climb trailing only Columbus Grove in the final Associated Press poll while Toledo Christian finished with a top ten ranking. TC, Maumee Valley Country Day, and Emmanuel Christian have moved over from the former Fostoria district.

Elida is the strongest of the D4 districts with the winner likely to become the favorite to win the regional. Columbus Grove is the top-ranked D4 team in the state according to the Associated Press while Ottoville should be ranked in the top ten. Delphos St. John's was state ranked before a mid-January slump. Seven of the thirteen teams in the Elida district were above .500 at the time of the draw. Columbus Grove, Leipsic, Pandora-Gilboa, and Patrick Henry all came over from the Findlay district with Ada moving from the Wapak district.

The Wapakoneta district is solid but not as strong as in previous years. There are no standout teams but an interesting draw nonetheless. After top seed Fort Recovery chose to go to St. Marys for the sectional, the next four seeds all headed for Coldwater. Six of the thirteen teams at Wapak had winning records at the time of the draw. Parkway and Lima Temple Christian move over from the Elida district while Spencerville moves down from D3.

Findlay is probably the weakest district on paper but there are some quality teams with Old Fort and Arlington at the top. Despite just one loss (and that to a solid D2 team), Old Fort has been missing in action when it comes to the state poll. Six of the fourteen teams at Findlay were above .500 at

the time of the draw. Fremont St. Joseph, Hopewell-Loudon, New Riegel, Old Fort, and Tiffin Calvert move over from the Fostoria district while Carey and Gibsonburg move down from D3.

The winner of the Defiance district will meet the winner of the Elida district in a regional semifinal at BGSU with the winner of the Wapakoneta district taking on the winner of the Findlay district in the other regional semifinal. Not to be Captain Obvious, but that guarantees Northwest Ohio will have one D4 team in Columbus. The Swami has his doubts about a second D4 team advancing to Columbus, but that is why they play the games.

## SECTIONALS

**SHELBY (WILLARD DISTRICT): #1 Lucas and #4 Sandusky St. Mary** are top seeds at Shelby. Lucas keeps adding to a school record for most regular season wins. The Cubs are the Mid-Buckeye champs with the lone loss a non-league game against D3 Waynedale. Logan Niswander of Lucas scored a school record 43 points against Ashland Crestview in early February. Lucas passed on the bye. Do not count out Sandusky St. Mary. The Panthers got healthy at the right time and are peaking as the tournament rolls around. Monroeville will have only their fifth winning season since the 1984 Class A state championship team.

Semifinals – Lucas over Mansfield Christian; Sandusky St. Mary over Mansfield St. Peter's; Monroeville over Plymouth

Finals – Lucas over Danbury; Sandusky St. Mary over Monroeville

**ASHLAND CRESTVIEW (WILLARD DISTRICT): #2 South Central and #3 Norwalk St. Paul** are top seeds at Crestview. South Central and Norwalk St. Paul sit in a tie with Western Reserve for the lead in the Firelands heading into the final weekend of the regular season. Simon Blair became South Central's career scoring leader back in December. St. Paul started the season 9-0 but has been well under .500 since. The Flyers still will likely get a piece of the Firelands title. After St. Paul chose to play a first round game, Mohawk grabbed the bye setting up an interesting sectional final. Mohawk should finish in 4<sup>th</sup> place in the N10. Crestline's Kaden Ronk broke the school record dating back to 1956 with 45 points versus Mansfield Temple Christian in January.

Semifinals – New London over Crestline; Norwalk St. Paul over Buckeye Central

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Finals – South Central over New London; Norwalk St. Paul over Mohawk

BRYAN (DEFIANCE DISTRICT): #2 Toledo Christian and #3 Hicksville are top seeds at Bryan. Toledo Christian has clinched at least a tie for the TAAC championship. TC's only losses on the season were road games versus Cardinal Stritch and Archbold. Hicksville finished in the top half of the GMC. Junior Logan Turnbull of Hicksville scored a school record 45 points against Hilltop in January. Fayette and North Central are battling for position in the top half of the BBC and will play back-to-back games to close out the regular season and start the tournament. Emmanuel Christian will finish above .500 but are only the #11 seed. Not sure about that one.

Semifinals – Emmanuel Christian over Holgate; Hicksville over Ayersville; Fayette over North Central

Finals – Toledo Christian over Emmanuel Christian; Hicksville over Fayette

NAPOLEON (DEFIANCE DISTRICT): #1 Antwerp and #4 Edgerton are top seeds at Napoleon. Antwerp finishes the regular season undefeated at 22-0 with their first outright GMC title since 2009-2010. The undefeated regular season is the first in school history. Edgerton finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place in the GMC but was able to wrestle the #4 seed from Pettisville based on their head-to-head win. Pettisville is the BBC champion but has struggled with the non-league portion of their schedule. The Blackbirds and Edon will also play back-to-back regular season and tournament games. Maumee Valley lost Zeb Jackson to IMG Academy and Steve Coleman to Toledo Rogers. The Hawks (they are not the Mohawks) played a challenging non-league schedule and will finish around .500.

Semifinals – Stryker over Hilltop; Maumee Valley Country Day over Edgerton; Pettisville over Edon

Finals – Antwerp over Stryker; Pettisville over Maumee Valley Country Day

VAN WERT (ELIDA DISTRICT): #2 Ottoville and #4 Kalida are top seeds at VW. The Big Green finished runner-up behind Columbus Grove in the PCL. Ottoville is on a twelve game (and counting) winning streak after overcoming early season injury issues. Ottoville and Columbus Grove in the district final would be outstanding, but do not count out Kalida. The Wildcats started slowly but have won twelve of their last fourteen. Kalida finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the PCL. Lincolnview is currently tied with Bluffton for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the NWC behind Grove. The Lancers are hovering around .500 overall. Miller City heads into the tournament on a losing streak.

Semifinals – Pandora-Gilboa over Continental; Kalida over Patrick Henry; Lincolnview over Miller City

Finals – Ottoville over Pandora-Gilboa; Kalida over Lincolnview

BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY (ELIDA DISTRICT): #1 Columbus Grove and #3 Delphos St. John's are the top seeds at Bluffton. Undefeated Columbus Grove is the champion in both the NWC and the PCL. Other than an overtime victory at Jackson Center, Columbus Grove's other wins have all been by double digits. Delphos St. John's started the season at 10-0 before slumping. The Blue Jays still should finish in the upper half of the MAC. 2019 D4 state champion Convoy Crestview had heavy graduation losses returning only one starter in OSU commit Kalen Etzler. Crestview started the season 4-9 but will finish around .500. The Knights have the potential to be a spoiler.

Semifinals – Convoy Crestview over Leipsic; Ada over Fort Jennings

Finals – Delphos St. John's over Convoy Crestview; Columbus Grove over Ada

ST. MARYS (WAPAKONETA DISTRICT): #1 Fort Recovery is the top seed at St. Marys. Fort Recovery is currently in 4<sup>th</sup> place in the MAC. The Indians do not have any players averaging in double figures (or maybe not). Ridgemont at #6 is the next highest seed at St. Marys. Ridgemont finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the NWCC behind Perry and USV. The Golden Gophers last finished above .500 in 2011-2012. St. Henry, New Bremen, and Marion Local are all in the lower half of the MAC. New Bremen has shown some positive signs late the season. Marion Local started slowly after another football state championship, but the Flyers are playing better of late. St. Henry has won sectional titles the past eight seasons.

Semifinals – Marion Local over Lima Temple Christian; New Bremen over Ridgemont; St. Henry over New Knoxville

Finals – Fort Recovery over Marion Local; New Bremen over St. Henry

COLDWATER (WAPAKONETA DISTRICT): #2 Parkway, #3 Minster, and #4 Lima Perry are the top seeds at Coldwater. Parkway will finish no worse than a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the MAC. The Panthers last finished above .500 in MAC play in 2000-2001. Caleb Kinney scored a school-

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record 46 points against Bradford in January and became Parkway's career scoring leader in February. Minster still can grab a share of the runner-up spot in the MAC. Perry is the NWCC champion. The Commodores chose to play in the first round setting up a potential sectional final against Minster. Upper Scioto Valley finished in the runner-up spot in the NWCC.

Semifinals – Upper Scioto Valley over Spencerville; Lima Perry over Waynesfield-Goshen

Finals – Parkway over Upper Scioto Valley; Minster over Lima Perry

TIFFIN COLUMBIAN (FINDLAY DISTRICT): #1 Old Fort and #4 Tiffin Calvert are top seeds at Tiffin. Old Fort is the SBC River champion. The Stockaders have length and depth. Old Fort's only loss on the season was to Oak Harbor in late December. Tiffin Calvert can still grab a share of the runner-up spot in the River. The Senecas will make the daunting half-mile trip for the sectional. Fremont St. Joseph is another SBC River team having a solid season and will finish the season above .500 for the first time since the Crimson Streaks tied for the MAL championship in 2012-2013.

Semifinals – New Riegel over Hardin Northern; Fremont St. Joseph over Arcadia; Tiffin Calvert over Vanlue

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

FOSTORIA (FINDLAY DISTRICT): #2 Arlington and #3 Hopewell-Loudon are top seeds at FHS. It will be a busy week at the new school with the old gym (remodeled) in Fostoria with a D1 and a D4 sectional plus a D4 district for the girls. Check your game times. Arlington can still gain a share of the BVC title with D3 Riverdale. The Red Devils passed up the bye and chose to play in the first round. Hopewell-Loudon is currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind champion Old Fort in the SBC River. Carey has to be considered a sleeper. The Blue Devils are middle of the pack in the N10 and will finish the season above .500. With Arlington playing a sectional semifinal, #7 seed Gibsonburg grabbed the bye.

Semifinals – Arlington over McComb; Hopewell-Loudon over North Baltimore; Carey over Cory-Rawson

Finals – Arlington over Gibsonburg; Hopewell-Loudon over Carey

## ***DISTRICTS***

The Defiance district winner will meet the Elida district winner and the Wapakoneta district winner will meet the

Findlay district winner in regional semifinal games at BGSU.

WILLARD: South Central won the district at Willard in 2019. The Willard district winner will face the winner of the Struthers district in a regional semifinal game at the Canton Fieldhouse.

Semifinals – Lucas over Sandusky St. Mary; South Central over Norwalk St. Paul

Final – Lucas over South Central

DEFIANCE: Hicksville won the district championship at Napoleon in 2019 while Maumee Valley Country Day won the district title at Fostoria. That marked back-to-back district championships for Maumee Valley.

Semifinals – Toledo Christian over Hicksville; Antwerp over Pettisville

Final – Toledo Christian over Antwerp

ELIDA: Defending D4 state champion Convoy Crestview won back-to-back district titles at Elida in 2018 and 2019.

Semifinals – Ottoville over Kalida; Columbus Grove over Delphos St. John's

Final – Columbus Grove over Ottoville

WAPAKONETA: St. Henry won the district at Wapak in 2019.

Semifinals – Fort Recovery over New Bremen; Minster over Parkway

Final – Minster over Fort Recovery

FINDLAY: Columbus Grove won the district championship at Findlay in 2019.

Semifinals – Old Fort over Tiffin Calvert; Arlington over Hopewell-Loudon

Final – Old Fort over Arlington

That's all folks. The Swami will be back for an abbreviated version prior to the regional and state tournaments. All facts, fiction, and opinions are those of the Swami. Any mistakes are somebody else's. Brackets are courtesy of daveyl.com and Mr. David Spengler. See you along the tournament trail. Adios and rock on.

The logo for "Trail Trash" is written in a blue, cursive script font. It is centered within a grey rectangular box.