

2023 OHSAA Boys High School Basketball Tournament

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Featuring Commentary & Predictions by ...

The Swami

Welcome to our second edition of Trail Trash for 2023 as we look ahead to the regional and state tournaments. Before moving forward, here are a few thoughts on the first two weeks of tournament play from around Northwest Ohio.

At the sectional level, six of the top eight seeds in D1 won to advance to the district. #9 Toledo St. John's Jesuit blew out #2 Tiffin Columbian 77-47 while #13 Bowling Green eliminated #6 Sylvania Northview in overtime. Despite missing one of their starters, SJJ beating TC was no surprise. The ease with which St. John's beat Tiffin (would have been the #1 seed per the Martin RPI if the draw had been a week or two later) was surprising. BG is the only team in D1 with a losing record to advance. In the other divisions, all of the teams seeded #1 and #2 advanced. Eight teams seeded #5 won sectional titles while #4 seeds did not fare well with only three teams advancing to the district. In the D2 Liberty-Benton District, #6 Lima Shawnee eliminated #5 Wapakoneta and #4 Napoleon to reach the .500 mark. Archbold, the #8 seed in the D3 Napoleon District, was the lowest seed to win a sectional championship. Two D4 teams with losing records advanced to district tournaments. In the Liberty-Benton District, #7 Vanlue eliminated #6 New Riegel and #4 Tiffin Calvert while #7 Norwalk St. Paul knocked off #4 Mansfield Christian and #6 Danbury in the Willard District.

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In the D1 district tournaments, #3

Perrysburg drubbed #4 Lima Senior 80-42 to win the Lake District. Lima had advanced to the district final with an overtime win over #13 Bowling Green. In the district at Central Catholic, #9 Toledo St. John's scored the final six points in a 55-50 win over #1 Toledo Whitmer in the championship game. SJJ had advanced to the final by eliminating #5 Findlay 35-32 on a buzzer-beater.

In D2, Sandusky was the only top seed to win a district title stopping #3 Lexington in the championship game at Ashland. Lex had advanced to the title game with an overtime win over #2 Shelby. At Lake, #2 Rossford defeated #1 Toledo Central Catholic 48-34 in the championship game. The Bulldogs held the Irish to 23% shooting (including 5 of 34 from distance). #3 Van Wert handled #1 Defiance 69-43 in the title game at Liberty-Benton. VW had advanced to the final by edging #2 St Marys 56-55 on a buzzer-beating three.

In the D3 district at Napoleon, #4 Wayne Trace nipped #1 Emmanuel Christian 50-49 on a late three-pointer. Wayne Trace had eliminated #3 Delta in a sectional final and #2

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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.

Swanton in the district semifinal. #1 Ottawa-Glandorf eased through the Lima Senior District including a 78-51 win over #2 Spencerville in the championship game. At Norwalk, #1 Cardinal Stritch won the district championship with a 56-51 over #3 Huron following a close win over #5 Margaretta in their semifinal game.

All five top-seeded D4 teams won district championships. At Willard, Colonel Crawford stopped #2 Lucas in the title game. Word is that the Lucas coach was not exactly enamored with the officiating. Marion Local defeated #4 St. Henry for the championship at Wapak. Marion Local barely survived #5 Fort Recovery and St Henry eliminated #2 New Bremen in the semifinals. At Defiance, Patrick Henry stopped #2 Antwerp 35-22 in the title game after trailing at halftime. Convoy Crestview beat #3 Ottoville 63-61 in double overtime to win the championship at Elida. Crestview trailed the Big Green by fourteen points late in the third quarter before rallying. Ottoville had eliminated #2 Kalida in a semifinal. Mohawk hit two free throws in the final seconds to defeat #2 Hopewell-Loudon for the district title at Liberty-Benton.

Nine of the thirteen top seeds (#3 Perrysburg was the top seed in the D1 Lake District) from around Northwest Ohio won district titles. Toledo St. John's Jesuit, the #9 seed out of the nineteen D1 teams, was the lowest seed to take home a championship. Wayne Trace, the #4 seed in the Napoleon District, was the lowest seed among the other divisions to win a district crown.

Regional tournaments in D2, D3, and D4 will be held at the Stroh Center on the campus of Bowling Green State University. The D4 semifinals will be played on Tuesday night followed by the D3 semifinals on Wednesday night and the D2 semifinals on Thursday night. The D4 championship game will be played on Friday night. The D3 and D2 finals will be played Saturday afternoon with the D3 championship at 1:00 pm and the D2 championship at 4:00 pm. The trek to the Stroh Center is the best week of the basketball season for the Swami. The D1 regional semifinal between Perrysburg and Toledo St. John's Jesuit will be played Thursday night at the University of Toledo. The winner at Savage Arena will play their regional championship game at Kent State on Saturday night. Colonel Crawford, the D4 district champion at Willard, will play in the regional at the Canton Fieldhouse.

The state tournament will again be held in Dayton at the University of Dayton Arena. The semifinals will be played on Friday, March 17 and Saturday, March 18 with the championship games on Sunday, March 19. That still feels weird. The UD Arena is an excellent place to watch basketball (although getting seats closer to the floor would make it even better). Plenty of parking adjacent to the building although it can be a pain getting out when there is a large crowd. And yes, there was tailgating last year.

My biggest complaint at Dayton is there is not much within walking distance of the arena.

The Swami had an overall record of 111-35 on his sectional and district picks. That is exactly the same record as a year ago. In 2022, the Swami correctly picked twelve of the thirteen district winners. This season was a disaster hitting on only five of the thirteen district champions. Back to the drawing board.

DIVISION I

REGIONALS

2022 state champion Pickerington Central along with the rest of last year's final four (Centerville, Lakewood St. Edward, Cleveland St. Ignatius) have all advanced to the regionals.

XAVIER UNIVERSITY: The semifinals will be played on Wednesday with the championship game on Saturday night. Centerville's only loss to a team from Ohio came against Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary. Centerville's Gabe Cupps is an Indiana signee and was Ohio's Mr. Basketball in 2022. Cincinnati Elder tied with Cincinnati LaSalle for the top spot in the Greater Catholic League South. Fairfield won the Greater Miami Conference with Cincinnati Princeton finishing in a tie for 2nd place. Fairfield swept their two games with Princeton. Fairfield losses include Elder and D4 Richmond Heights.

Semifinals – Centerville over Cincinnati Elder; Fairfield over Cincinnati Princeton

Final – Centerville over Fairfield

OHIO DOMINICAN/OHIO UNIVERSITY: The semifinal games will be played on Wednesday and Thursday at Ohio Dominican University in Columbus with the championship game Saturday night in Athens. Olentangy Orange won the first district title in school history. Newark was the lowest seed (#11) in the Central District to advance. The Wildcats eliminated #2 Olentangy Liberty in the district finals. Orange defeated Newark during the regular season. Westerville South eliminated higher seeds Westerville North and Dublin Jerome for their district title. Ed Calo is in his 36th year as head coach at South. His son Anthony is the head coach at Olentangy Orange. Pickerington Central's only loss to an OHSAA team came against Centerville on a neutral court. Devin Royal from Pick Central is an Ohio State signee.

Semifinals – Olentangy Orange over Newark; Pickerington Central over Westerville South

Final – Pickerington Central over Olentangy Orange

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY: Semifinal games will be played on Tuesday and Wednesday with the championship game slated for Friday night at the MAC Center. Lakewood St. Edward won a seventh straight district championship and their seventeenth in nineteen years. The Eagles have lost at St. Ignatius and to Richmond Heights. Akron Hoban won a second straight district championship. Stow has lost to Brecksville-Broadview Heights and Nordonia. Stow defeated neighborhood rival Walsh Jesuit in their regular season meeting. Hoban also has a win over Walsh Jesuit.

Semifinals – Lakewood St. Edward over Akron Archbishop Hoban; Stow-Munroe Falls over Cuyahoga Falls Walsh Jesuit

Final – Lakewood St. Edward over Stow-Munroe Falls

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: The semifinal games will be played at Kent State and at the University of Toledo on Thursday with the championship game Saturday night at KSU. NLL co-champion Perrysburg won their first district championship since 2008 with the win over Lima Senior. That broke Lima’s streak of four straight district championships. St. John’s Jesuit avenged two regular season losses with their district final win over Whitmer. SJJ tied with Lima Senior for 4th place in this final season of the TRAC. The Titans won a district title in 2021, but were eliminated from their regional semifinal by contract tracing. Garfield Heights losses are to Dayton Chaminade-Julienne, Maple Heights, and Lakewood St. Edward in overtime. Cleveland St. Ignatius won regional championships the past two seasons.

Semifinals – Garfield Heights over Cleveland St. Ignatius; Perrysburg over Toledo St. John’s Jesuit

Final – Garfield Heights over Perrysburg

STATE

The D1 semifinal games will be played on Saturday evening with the championship game on Sunday night at the UD Arena

Semifinals – Centerville over Pickerington Central; Lakewood St. Edward over Garfield Heights

Final – Centerville over Lakewood St. Edward

DIVISION II

REGIONALS

2022 D2 state champion Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary was eliminated by Lyndhurst Brush in a D1 district semifinal. 2022 D2 state runner-up Gates Mills Gilmour Academy

and Kettering Alter have advanced to the regionals. All D2 regional semifinal games are scheduled to be played on Thursday.

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: The championship game is scheduled for Saturday afternoon following the D3 regional championship at Bowling Green. SBC Lake champion Sandusky set a school record for most wins in a season with 24. The only loss for the Blue Streaks was at Tiffin Columbian in December. Rocky River Lutheran West, the Chagrin Valley Conference champion, has wins over Ottawa-Glandorf and Cleveland St. Ignatius. Lutheran West’s losses are to Parma Heights Holy Name, Cleveland Heights Lutheran East, and Akron Hoban. NBC champion Rossford won their first district title since 1989. 6’10” Derek Vorst is an Indiana State signee. The Bulldogs have given up an average of twenty-five points per game in the tournament. Van Wert finished in 5th place in the WBL. Six of Van Wert’s seven losses during the regular season were by three points or less.

Semifinals – Rocky River Lutheran West over Sandusky; Rossford over Van Wert

Final – Rocky River Lutheran West over Rossford

VANDALIA BUTLER: The championship game will be played Saturday night. Dayton Chaminade-Julienne won the Greater Catholic League Coed title with Kettering Alter right behind. Chaminade-Julienne’s lone loss to a team from Ohio came against Dayton Carroll. George Washington III of Chaminade-Julienne is a Michigan signee. Dayton Dunbar shared the Dayton City League title with Dayton Meadowdale. Dunbar edged Kettering Alter in their regular season game. Columbus Bishop Watterson tied for 3rd in the Central Catholic League.

Semifinals – Kettering Archbishop Alter over Dayton Dunbar; Dayton Chaminade-Julienne over Columbus Bishop Watterson

Final – Dayton Chaminade-Julienne over Kettering Archbishop Alter

OHIO UNIVERSITY: The championship game will be played Saturday afternoon following the D3 regional championship at the Convo.

Columbus Bishop Ready joins D4 Richmond Heights as the only remaining undefeated teams. Bishop Ready won the five-team Central Catholic League. Zanesville Maysville and Dresden Tri-Valley split their two games. That was Maysville’s only loss. Tri-Valley also defeated Lancaster Fairfield Union in a non-league matchup. Fairfield Union shared the Mid State League Buckeye title with D1 Teays Valley.

Semifinals – Columbus Bishop Ready over Zanesville



Maysville; Lancaster Fairfield Union over Dresden Tri-Valley

Final – Columbus Bishop Ready over Lancaster Fairfield Union

CANTON CIVIC CENTER: The regional championship game at Canton is scheduled for Saturday afternoon. Akron Buchtel won the Akron City Series. Gilmour Academy won a third straight district championship while Youngstown Chaney won a fourth straight district title. Cleveland Glenville won a second straight district championship. The Tarblooders lost to Cleveland Rhodes in the Cleveland Senate League championship game.

Semifinals – Akron Buchtel over Youngstown Chaney; Gates Mills Gilmour Academy over Cleveland Glenville

Final – Akron Buchtel over Gates Mills Gilmour Academy

STATE

D2 will kick off the 101st Annual State Boys Basketball Tournament (still waiting on the 98th) on the morning of Friday, March 17 at the University of Dayton Arena. The championship game will be played Sunday morning.

Semifinals – Dayton Chaminade-Julienne over Rocky River Lutheran West; Columbus Bishop Ready over Akron Buchtel

Final – Dayton Chaminade-Julienne over Columbus Bishop Ready

DIVISION III

REGIONALS

2022 D3 state champion Cincinnati Taft lost to Kettering Alter in a D2 district final. 2022 state runner-up Ottawa-Glandorf, Columbus Africentric, and Cleveland Heights Lutheran East have all advanced to the regionals. All D3 semifinal games will be played Wednesday night.

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: The championship game will be played early Saturday afternoon at BG. WBL champion Ottawa-Glandorf won a fourth straight district championship and their eleventh in the last thirteen years. The Titan are seeking a third straight regional title. O-G's losses are to Rocky River Lutheran West, Cincinnati Princeton, and Lima Senior. Cardinal Stritch finished as the TAAC runner-up to Emmanuel Christian. The Cardinals have lost to Emmanuel, St. Marys, and Maumee Valley Country Day. Stritch won a regional championship in 2019. Wayne Trace tied Antwerp for the runner-up spot in the GMC

behind Paulding. The Raiders lost to O-G in the district finals in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Canton Central Catholic plays an independent schedule. The Crusaders came back from a double-digit deficit to stun top seed Creston Norwayne in their district final.

Semifinals – Wayne Trace over Canton Central Catholic; Ottawa-Glandorf over Cardinal Stritch

Final – Ottawa-Glandorf over Wayne Trace

OHIO UNIVERSITY: The regional final will be played early Saturday afternoon at OU. Columbus Africentric lost to Columbus Northland in the Columbus City League championship game. Daily Swain of Africentric is a Xavier signee. Garaway knocked off top seed Malvern in the East District final while Seaman North Adams eliminated top seed (and tied with Ottawa-Glandorf at the top of the Associated Press poll) Minford in their district final. South Point won the Ohio Valley Conference title.

Semifinals – Columbus Africentric over Sugarcreek Garaway; South Point over Seaman North Adams

Final – Columbus Africentric over South Point

KETTERING FAIRMONT: The regional championship is scheduled for Saturday night at the Trent Arena. Miami East's only losses were to D1 Westerville North and D4 Troy Christian. Miami East shared the Three Rivers Conference title with Troy Christian. Camden Preble Shawnee won their first district championship since 1989. Preble Shawnee and New Madison Tri-Village were the top teams in the Western Ohio Athletic Conference. Canal Winchester Harvest Prep won their fifth district title in the past six years.

Semifinals – Canal Winchester Harvest Prep over New Madison Tri-Village; Camden Preble Shawnee over Casstown Miami East

Final – Camden Preble Shawnee over Canal Winchester Harvest Prep

CANTON FIELDHOUSE: The championship game is slated for Saturday night. Cleveland Heights Lutheran East has won five straight regional championships with state championships in 2017 and 2019. Cuyahoga Heights won their first district title since 1997 while Beachwood won their first district championship since 2013. Mentor Lake Catholic won their first district tile since 2017.

Semifinals – Cuyahoga Heights over Beachwood; Cleveland Heights Lutheran East over Mentor Lake Catholic

Final – Cleveland Heights Lutheran East over Cuyahoga Heights

STATE

The D3 semifinals will be the early games on Saturday with the championship game scheduled for late Sunday afternoon.

Semifinals – Ottawa-Glandorf over Columbus Africentric; Cleveland Heights Lutheran East over Camden Preble Shawnee

Final – Ottawa-Glandorf over Cleveland Heights Lutheran East

DIVISION IV

REGIONALS

2022 D4 state champion Richmond Heights (and it is really unfortunate that they did not move up to D3) and Berlin Hiland have advanced to the regionals. New Madison Tri-Village, last season's runner-up in D4, has advanced to the regionals in D3. All D4 regional semifinals will be played Tuesday night with the championship games scheduled for Friday night.

OHIO UNIVERSITY: The regional final will be played early Saturday afternoon at OU. Franklin Furnace Green won their first district title since 1997. Green eliminated previously undefeated Leesburg Fairfield in a district final. Westerville Northside Christian won the first district championship in school history. Stewart Federal Hocking will make the short trip to Athens after winning their first district championship since 1970. Berlin Hiland will make the long trip to Athens after winning a seventh straight district title.

Semifinals – Franklin Furnace Green over Westerville Northside Christian; Berlin Hiland over Stewart Federal Hocking

Final – Berlin Hiland over Franklin Furnace Green

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: MAC champion Marion Local won a second straight district championship. Patrick Henry won their first district championship since 2002. The Patriots finished as the runner-up to Wauseon in the NWOAL. Convoy Crestview won their first district championship since the 2019 D4 state championship team. Crestview finished as the runner-up to Spencerville in the NWC. The Knights lost to Spencerville, Delphos St. John's and Van Wert. Mohawk won the second district championship in school history with the first coming in 2018. The Warriors finished as the runner-up to Carey in the N10. Mohawk losses were to Wynford, Colonel Crawford, and Carey.

Semifinals – Marion Local over Patrick Henry; Convoy Crestview over Mohawk

Final – Marion Local over Convoy Crestview

KETTERING FAIRMONT: Jackson Center and Russia tied for the Shelby County Athletic League title splitting their season series. That was Jackson Center's only loss while Russia also lost to Versailles and Marion Local. It has been an especially bittersweet season for Russia after head coach Dave Borchers was fatally injured in an automobile accident back in October. Troy Christian was the co-champion of the Three Rivers Conference with D3 Miami East. Columbus Patriot Prep won the first district championship in school history.

Semifinals – Jackson Center over Columbus Patriot Prep; Russia over Troy Christian

Final – Jackson Center over Russia

CANTON FIELDHOUSE: Colonel Crawford won a third district championship in the past four seasons. Crawford was the D3 regional runner-up to Ottawa-Glandorf in 2022 but graduated four starters. The Eagles finished behind Carey and Mohawk in the N10. Dalton won their first district championship since 2002. Willoughby Cornerstone Christian is coached by Babe Kwasniak who led Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph to three state championships. All of Cornerstone's losses were to D1 and D2 teams. Richmond Heights is currently on a forty-five game winning streak and has an 83-80 win over Lakewood St. Edward. Richmond Heights also owns three-point wins over D1 Fairfield and D3 Lutheran East along with a 5-point win over D1 Lyndhurst Brush. They would be the favorite to win in D3, but it would be a much better look.

Semifinals – Dalton over Colonel Crawford; Richmond Heights over Willoughby Cornerstone Christian

Final – Richmond Heights over Dalton



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STATE

The D4 semifinal games will be Friday evening with the championship game scheduled for early Sunday afternoon.

Semifinals – Marion Local over Berlin Hiland; Richmond Heights over Jackson Center

Final – Richmond Heights over Marion Local

Northwest Ohio had only two teams (Ottawa-Glandorf, Antwerp) in Dayton last season. Time for three or four teams to get down there. That wraps up Trail Trash and

the Swami for our thirtieth year. All facts, figures, errors, and opinions are those of the Swami. As always, thank you for reading. Please check out our brackets on the davey1.com website. There are none better. See you at the Stroh Center and in Dayton. Stay safe.