

SIDELINE



Small-school hopefuls Bluffton, Lakeland and West Noble are assuredly asking: "What do we have to do to get some Swami love?" Well, for starters, keep winning. Speaking of "winning," I was 19-1 last week on my picks and only flubbed up the Bluffton Tigers' impressive dub over South Adams. My Starfires bias was showing, I suppose. I love the boys from Berne! Still, correctly picking 19-of-20 games sure feels like I'm hitting my stride. But, as you know, hubris can creep up at any time. Just ask Notre Dame. I must stay focused!

THE SWAMI SCALE

- 1. LEO:** Last week looked more like the Leo we know and love. Now, can the Lions sustain that effort?
- 2. SNIDER:** I'm keeping the Panthers right here at No. 2, though last week's outing was a bit sluggish.
- 3. CARROLL:** The Chargers got their first dub of 2024 in convincing fashion — 45-zilch over South.
- 4. EAST NOBLE:** Quietly, almost devilishly, the Knights are lurking. A "trap" game is on tap for tonight.
- 5. BISHOP LUERS:** An intriguing "home" game tonight vs. a fast Wayne squad awaits these Knights.
- 6. HOMESTEAD:** The Spartans vault back into the Swami's Top 10 after last week's win over Wayne.
- 7. GARRETT:** The Railroaders are pounding teams in a very un-Garrett-like manner. Lakers up next.
- 8. HERITAGE:** The beard may be gone, but Patty is still producing on the gridiron. SA visits tonight.
- 9. BISHOP DWENGER:** The Saints' defense was downright stingy in last week's 14-6 win over North.
- 10. COLUMBIA CITY:** C-City has walked this walk before, but the schedule is definitely getting tougher.

FEATURED MATCHUPS

CARROLL at BISHOP DWENGER: The Saints' secondary will be tested as Iowa-bound Jimmy Sullivan could shred Shields Field tonight. BD will try to slow the game with a deliberate rushing attack on "O."

SWAMI SAYS: Carroll by 29

CONCORDIA at NORTH SIDE: If the Legends haven't cleaned up their special-teams breakdowns and penalty issues, they'll get choked out at Chambers. My crystal ball is seeing Jamari Pearson in space.

SWAMI SAYS: North Side by 19

HUNTINGTON NORTH at COLUMBIA CITY: One of the more intriguing games on tonight's docket, HN-CC pits the upstart Vikes against the sneaky-good Eagles at home. CC has Stratton Fuller; HN doesn't.

SWAMI SAYS: Columbia City by 14

SOUTH ADAMS at HERITAGE: If the Patriots get an early lead, look for big "run" numbers from RB Nasir Martin. If they fall behind early, expect area-passing leader Eli Tigulis to light up the stat sheet.

SWAMI SAYS: Heritage by 28

LAKELAND at GARRETT: This showdown very well could decide the NECC's Big School Division (don't tell West Noble that I said that). It's a contrast of styles: Lakeland's air show vs. the 'Roaders' run-fest.

SWAMI SAYS: Garrett by 13

CHURUBUSCO at EASTSIDE: Both teams are desperate for some success on "O." The big questions? Does Angelo Ianucilli suit up for the Eagles at FB/LB? Will Linkin Carter play QB for the Beastsiders?

SWAMI SAYS: Eastside by 12

THE UNDERCARD

Snider at South Side: The youthful Archers are improving, even though the scores don't reflect it quite yet. Panthers pounce tonight!

SWAMI SAYS: Snider by 36

Wayne at Bishop Luers: A fun, south-side tilt tonight between the Generals and Knights. I like Luers at home on that gorgeous grass.

SWAMI SAYS: Luers by 9

Homestead at Northrop: If David Callison returns, the Bruins will hang around in this one. The scoreboard might short-circuit tonight.

SWAMI SAYS: Homestead by 15

DeKalb at East Noble: This one is a toughie, because you know EN has to be considered the favorite. But I like these Barons, too.

SWAMI SAYS: East Noble by 10

Leo at New Haven: The Bulldogs may have to wait another week to give their first-year coach his first-ever victory. Leo is just better.

SWAMI SAYS: Leo by 22

Norwell at Belmont: This might be the best chance at a dub for both teams the rest of the way in 2024. I'm taking Norwell on the road.

SWAMI SAYS: Norwell by 17

Jay County at Adams Central: It's hard to tell how good JC is, while the Jets seem to be flying high as usual. I like AC to win easily.

SWAMI SAYS: Adams Central by 35

Woodlan at Bluffton: If the Warriors can eat some clock with a few lengthy drives, they'll keep this one tight for awhile. Still, Tigers win.

SWAMI SAYS: Bluffton by 21

Central Noble at Prairie Heights: PH struggles against passing teams, so CN has to be the favorite. But I like PH in the Upset Special.

SWAMI SAYS: Prairie Heights by 1

West Noble at Angola: The Hornets were stung by two touchdowns last year in this matchup. That seems about right once again.

SWAMI SAYS: West Noble by 14

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BIG TAG OF THE WEEK!



CHARLIE RIDDLE HERITAGE

The 6-foot-4, 275-pound senior guard had a textbook pancake block in last week's 28-6 win over Woodlan. On the first snap of the game (a sweep run to the right featuring RB Nasir Martin), Riddle riddled the Warriors' edge defender as he pulled down the line. "It looked like an old-school highlight of (former Dallas Cowboys great) Larry Allen," his coach said.

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