

88TH BOYS BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT BEGINS

A field of 381 teams begins play tonight (March 3, 1998) in the 88th Annual Indiana High School Athletic Association Boys Basketball Tournament series. For the first time, tournament competition is being conducted in four enrollment classes. The customary four-week tournament run will conclude March 28 with four state championship games at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. Those four champions will return April 3-4 in the inaugural tournament of champions at the RCA Dome.

As in the past, sectional play is being conducted at 64 sites across the state. The 64 sectional winners -- 16 in each class -- will advance to regional play on Friday, March 13. The regional round will consist of a single game at each of 32 sites. Those 32 winners -- eight in each class -- will advance to semi-state play on Saturday, March 21. There will be two semi-state tournaments -- one in the north and one in the south -- in each of the four classes. Each site will have two first-round games on March 21, with the championship game that night. The eight semi-state victors will advance to the state finals on March 28 at the RCA Dome.

Brian Wray, a senior guard at Plymouth, has led the state season scoring race since late December. He takes a narrow lead over senior guard Adam Seitz of Pike Central into tournament play. Wray has scored 559 points in 20 games for a 27.9 average, while Seitz has tallied 554 points in 20 games for a 27.7 average. The one-game high for the regular season was posted by Plainfield junior Gavin Groninger with 57 points against Brownsburg on Dec. 6. It was one of four 50-point efforts reported during the 1997-98 regular season.

For the third straight year, no team was able to navigate the regular season without a loss. The last teams to go unbeaten were Bedford North Lawrence and Manchester in 1994-95. The three-year absence of unbeatens entering tournament play is the longest stretch in more than 50 years.

Eight schools, topped by Delta and Pike at 21-1, finished the regular season with one loss.

BEST RECORDS, 1997-98

Information courtesy of *Bloomington Herald-Times*

21-1 -- Delta, Pike.

20-1 -- Bluffton.

19-1 -- Anderson, East Chicago Central, Morristown, Pike Central, Winchester Community.

18-2 -- Andrean, Caston, Hauser, Manchester, Marion, Mooresville, Plymouth.

18-3 -- Fort Wayne Wayne, Union (Dugger), Yorktown.

17-3 -- Bloomington South, Blue River Valley, East Central, Greenfield-Central, Jennings County, Lafayette Central Catholic, Lebanon, Maconaquah, Northwestern, Perry Central, Silver Creek.

16-3 -- Fort Wayne Dwenger.