

Winchester CHATTER---Sat, Jan 9, 2016---Winchester CHATTER---1st DAY--BY GWS

Let's clean up a few loose ends from a year ago. Porta/AC Central came in number 1, and left number 1, after beating Carrollton 52-49. The Bluejays were the first team ranked number one to finish as tournament champions since Porta won it as a top ranked team in 2008. Michael Mast of Liberty led the tournament in scoring with 82 points, and there were 3 upsets.

There are four returning all- tournament selections from a year ago..Max Muller of Porta/AC, Manning Plater of Rushville/Industry, Drew Burwinkel of Payson, and Luke Gillingham of Carrollton...all seniors this year.

This is the third straight year for the field for the Winchester Invitational Tournament to remain the same. That's a big accomplishment in this time of co-op teams and consolidation. Remember, this is the 95th edition of the Winchester Invitational Tournament, making it the oldest invitational in the state.

Not only are there no first round re-matches from a year ago. But, no team is playing in the same slot as last year. In fact, just one game is a re-match from any part of last year's tournament. Camp Point knocked off Brown County, as predicted in the semi-finals of the consolation bracket from a year ago.59-47. The two teams meet in the first round this year, in the second game. Brown County is rated 8th, and Camp Point 16th.

No one is unbeaten coming into the tournament, though Liberty and Payson each have just one loss. Camp Point is looking for its 2nd win. That's a far cry from a year ago when Camp Point roared through the consolation side to claim that trophy, holding West Central to just 18 points in the consolation title game.

There are more than a few fans who are glad that Pittsfield is not in this year's WIT field. Pittsfield already owns wins against Routt, Griggsville Perry, West Central, Brown County, North Greene and Liberty. However, Liberty beat Pittsfield earlier in the year, only to lose in this year's Macomb Holiday Tournament, as Pittsfield finished 2nd to Rockridge.

There has not been an upset in the first round of the Winchester Invitational Tournament since 2013. If you are counting, that's 19 straight games. The last upset came in the '13 tournament when 2nd ranked Routt was beaten by number 10 Camp Point 41-36. Camp Point went on to lose in the 5th place finals to West Central, while Routt advanced to the consolation title game, but lost to Griggsville Perry. The last time the top ranked team fell in the opening round was in 2012, when top ranked West Central lost to number 9 Brown County 61-48.

Carrollton last lost in the first round of the WIT in 2002. Carrollton came in the 2002 tournament rated 12th and lost to West Pike 60-56. That's 12 straight years on the winners' side of the bracket. At the other end of the spectrum, Pleasant Hill is trying to snap a 15 game losing streak at Winchester. The Wolves last won in the 2008 tournament in the first round of the consolation side over Waverly 56-37. Triopia would beat them in the next game 44-29.

Since re-entering the tournament in 2014, Porta/AC has won 7 of the 8 games played here. That includes all four last year, and 3 of the 4 in 2014. The last loss was in the semi finals to Liberty in 2014 47-42. Prior to that, Porta won it all in 2008, was second to Brown County in 2007, and finished 4th as a 13 seed in 2006.

One of the 16 teams in this year's Winchester Invitational Tournament field is rated among the state's best boys basketball teams. Liberty was rated 9th in the latest Associated Press Class 1-A poll. Payson also received votes, but wasn't included among the top 10. Porta was among a handful of Class 2A polls mentioned outside the top 10.

Jeff Krumwiede of Carrollton comes in to the tournament looking for that 7th Winchester Invitational tourney title. That would be a new record, breaking the tie with Bob Hembrough of Beardstown and Max Greer of Winchester. Krumwiede already owns the most wins with 55, trails Dan Bowman of Greenfield by 6 in the number of games coached, and is behind Dick Haman of Carrollton and Dan Bowman in years coaching at the tournament. Jeff Abell of West Central could move up to the third spot in games won at the tournament.