

35th Annual Girls Softball State Tournament Preview



2012 OHSAA Softball State Pairings

*** Home Teams Listed First**

Division IV

Thursday, May 31, 10 a.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 4 Covington (25-4) vs. No. 10 Vienna Mathews (24-5)

Thursday, May 31, 12:30 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 1 Strasburg-Franklin (25-4) vs. No. 3 Convoy Crestview (26-4)

Finals: Saturday, June 2, 10 a.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium

Division III

Thursday, May 31, 3 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 1 Milan Edison (27-1) vs. No. 2 Carroll Bloom-Carroll (28-3)

Thursday, May 31, 5:30 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 8 Felicity-Franklin (24-0) vs. No. 3 Warren Champion (22-2)

Finals: Saturday, June 2, 1 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium

Division II

Friday, June 1, 10 a.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
Circleville Logan Elm (20-10) vs. No. 4 Greenville (28-4)

Friday, June 1, 12:30 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 2 Poland Seminary (26-2) vs. No. 1 LaGrange Keystone (30-0)

Finals: Saturday, June 2, 4 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium

Division I

Friday, June 1, 3 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 5 Medina (24-4) vs. No. 1 North Canton Hoover (27-3)

Friday, June 1, 5:30 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium
No. 3 Elyria (26-2) vs. No. 2 Lebanon (30-1)

Finals: Saturday, June 2, 7 p.m. – Akron Firestone Stadium

2012 OHSAA Softball State Preview

The 35th edition of the Ohio High School Athletic Association's state softball tournament begins Thursday at beautiful Firestone Stadium in Akron, which has hosted the state tournament since 2008. Sixteen teams have qualified through the sectional, district and regional tournaments to reach the season's final weekend, with six teams reaching the state tournament for the first time.

All four state champions from a year ago are back seeking to defend their title. They include North Canton Hoover in Division I, Poland Seminary in Division II, Warren Champion in Division III and Strasburg-Franklin in Division IV.

The divisional order of play this year is IV, III, II and I. Semifinal game times are 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. The championship games are at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. and will be televised by SportsTime Ohio.

In Division I, Hoover (28-3) ended the regular season ranked No. 1 in the state and is seeking its sixth state title (2011, 2008, 2006, 1999, 1998). The Vikings scored 10 or more runs 18 times this season. They will face ninth-ranked and first-time state qualifier Medina (24-4) in the semifinals. The other Division I semifinal pits second ranked Lebanon (30-1) against third-ranked Elyria (26-2). A first-time state qualifier, Lebanon's only loss this season was a 2-1 decision to defending Division II state champion Poland Seminary. Nine-time state qualifier Elyria, meanwhile, has played in the state championship game five times since 2002, winning a pair of titles (2002, 2009).

In Division II, unranked Logan Elm went 15-10 during the regular season, never winning more than three games in a row, but the Braves (20-10) have been dominant in the postseason to reach their first state tournament. They face fifth-ranked Greenville (28-4) in the semifinals, which has reached the state tournament for the third time and owns one state title (2007). The other Division II semifinal pits previously mentioned defending state champion Poland Seminary (27-2) against undefeated two-time state champ LaGrange Keystone (30-0, titles in 2006 and 1999). Keystone, which has outscored its opposition in the tournament 48-3, finished the regular season ranked No. 1, while Poland, which scored 10 or more runs 21 times this season, was ranked No. 2.

The first Division III semifinal sees third-ranked and state tournament newcomer Milan Edison (30-1) face fourth-ranked Bloom-Carroll (28-3), which upset No. 1-ranked and previously undefeated Lucasville Valley in the regional final to reach its third state title. The Bulldogs won state championships in their previous two trips to the state tournament (2006 and 2007). The other Division III semifinal features another state first-timer, Felicity Franklin (24-0), taking on defending state champion and four-time title-holder Warren Champion (22-3). Though undefeated, FF was not ranked at the end of the regular season, while Champion was ranked fifth and is now making its seventh state tournament appearance with titles coming in 2011, 1994, 1980 and 1978.

Division IV has the most returning state tournament qualifiers with three: Covington (25-4), defending state champion Strasburg-Franklin (25-4) and Convoy Crestview (26-5). The fourth team, unranked Vienna Mathews (24-5), is making its first trip to the state tournament and faces sixth-ranked Covington in the first semifinal. The other semifinal is a rematch of the 2011 state championship game (won by Strasburg-Franklin 3-1). The Tigers were ranked No. 1 in the final regular-season state coaches poll and are making their 13th state tournament appearance, with six championships (2011, 2009, 1991, 1989, 1988, 1987). Tenth-ranked Crestview is in the state tournament for the 10th time and owns one title (2005).