

# Aces look to trump strong field at Du Quoin

Cartersville, Harrisburg, Nashville all look strong enough to get to SIU Arena

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DU QUOIN - Since the end of the 2012-13 season, the **Mount Carmel Golden Aces** were looking forward to getting back to a sectional.

Coach Tyler Buss helped lead his club back to the sectional this season in winning the school's second consecutive regional crown on Friday night in dramatic fashion with a 92-87 double-overtime thriller over Flora, knocking the Wolves out of the postseason for the second time in as many years.

The combination of senior forward Reece Metcalf and junior guard Levi Laws has been a big problem for the opposition in 2013-14.

The 6-foot-3 Metcalf is a smooth lefty who has averaged 17.8 points a game for Mount Carmel and he notched 30-points Friday night in the Flora win. He also leads the team with nine rebounds a night.

Laws, a 6-foot guard, is second in scoring with 12.5 points a night and leads the team with and eye-catching 10.9 assists a night.

Up front CJ Diel is a 6-foot-5 senior (11.8 p.p.g., 3.5 r.p.g.) who clogs the middle for the Golden Aces.

Thomas Allen is also a starter and this 5-foot-11 guard averages 4.9 points a game.

Six-foot-three senior Riley Raber is also a starter while Austin Thompson comes off the bench for Coach Buss.

Both contribute points with Austin averaging 7.9 points a contest.

While the Aces are 21-8, they are 14-2 versus Illinois schools with loses to Marshall in the first game of the season at the Lawrence County Capital Classic and to state-ranked St. Joseph-Ogden at the Pinckneyville Showcase back in February.

Playing in the Big Eight Conference in Indiana, Mount Carmel is battle tested.

The **Cartersville Lions** and head coach Scott Burzynski reached the sectional after a big win over Murphysboro to capture the Anna-Jonesboro Regional crown on Friday night, 67-49.

The Lions had a fine season, finishing second in the SIRR Mississippi Division behind Nashville and won the Murphysboro tournament back in December. They added the West Frankfort Mid-Winter Classic title to the resume back in January.

They are 23-6 overall heading into Tuesday night's battle with Mount Carmel.

Leading the way for the Lions this season are brothers Matt and Will Galik.

The twins are both juniors with Will standing 6-foot-4 while Matt is 6-foot-1.

They are nearly identical on the basketball floor as well, with Will leading the club with 14.9 points a night while Matt adds 14.4 to the chart.

The senior leader of this club has been Michael Aschemann, a 6-foot guard who adds

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11.6 points a game and tops the club in rebounds with 6.3 per try.

Blake Watson, a 5-foot-10 junior, also tosses in some points a game (7.3) as does Austin Swalls, a 6-foot sophomore, who nets 4.8 p.p.g.

Matt Bigelow and Taylor Heil add 3.6 p.p.g. and 1.8 p.p.g. respectively off the bench for Coach Burzynski.

Aschemann topped the 1,000-point plateau this season for the Lions, who won their first regional title since 2005.

The **Harrisburg Bulldogs** have had a tough season, the campaign after winning the 2A state title in 2012-13.

Coach Randy Smithpeters' club (18-10) battled injuries and a tough schedule but are back in the state tournament picture after winning their own regional on Friday night with a 65-60 win over Benton.

The Bulldogs lost a lot to graduation last spring but the guys back have experience.

Eli Taborn-Scott, a 6-foot-4 senior, has been a three-year starter for the Bulldogs.

Bahari Amaya, a 6-foot-4 junior, was the first Bulldog off the bench last season but has been a full-time starter this season.

Six-foot-three senior Jarren Goldman and 5-foot-11 sophomore Anfernee Houston, along with 6-foot-2 senior Jake Simerly have played well.

Goldman was hurt for part of the season but is back for Harrisburg.

The **Nashville Hornets** have a 23-7 record and, after a tough beginning of the season with injuries and a tough schedule, are on a 16-2 run since Christmas.

Coach Brad Weathers has his club playing well after dispatching Red Bud and Pinckneyville to win their own Nashville 2A Regional this past week.

Only one player is averaging double-figures for the Hornets, 6-foot-6 sophomore forward Royce Newman (13.1 p.p.g., 5.9 r.p.g.) but four other starters are all over seven points a night as Nashville club is balanced on the offensive end of the floor.

Daniel Thorson, a 6-foot-11 junior guard, adds 8.4 points a night for Coach Weathers' squad. Six-foot-six senior forward Clint Johannes averages 7.6 points and 4.1 boards a game.

Keegan Anderson is a 6-foot senior guard (7.4 points, two assists) who starts along with Hunter Beetley, a 6-foot-3 senior forward (7.2 p.p.g.).

Six-foot-six junior Dylan Mueller (4.9 p.p.g.) has come on as of late, adding to strength to an already imposing frontcourt for Nashville.

## **ABV Projected Champion – Mount Carmel.**

*Jack Bullock is the Editor/Web Publisher of A Baseline View.com. For the past 16-seasons, ABV has covered boy's high school basketball in southern Illinois. Previews, Rankings, Scores, Standings, Tournament Brackets and Game Stories for over 100-teams.*