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ASHEBORO – After the presents have been opened, the carolers are finished and the short holiday break for high school basketball teams is over, the second SportsTone.net Christmas Invitational is set to begin Thursday at Asheboro High School. The Randolph County banner will be carried by Asheboro, Southwestern Randolph, Randleman and Trinity in the eight-team field for both boys and girls.

The four local teams will be joined by Lexington, Eastern Guilford, Chatham Charter and Williams in the girls tournament with Thomasville, EG, Chatham Charter and Williams completing the eight-team boys field.

There will be eight games each day of the three-day tournament with winners advancing in the winner's bracket while consolation games will be held each day. Girls games and boys games will alternate beginning at 10 a.m. each day.

Opening round games include Trinity vs Lexington (girls) at 10 a.m., Trinity vs. Thomasville (boys) at 11:30 a.m., Randleman against Eastern Guilford (girls) at 1 p.m., and RHS vs. EG (boys) at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Those games will be followed by Southwestern Randolph vs. Chatham Charter (girls) at 4 p.m. and SWR and Williams in a boys game at 5:30 p.m. The final two games feature Asheboro and Williams (girls) at 7 p.m. and Asheboro against Chatham Charter (boys) at 8:30 p.m.

The AHS boys come into the tournament 7-1 with its only loss coming to Randleman. "We'll be able to work on some things before the conference starts, that's about the only advantage of not starting the conference before Christmas," veteran AHS coach Brian Nance said. "We'll try and work on some things we didn't do too well in the first part of the season."

Nance said he hopes to see his team become more consistent from the outside.

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"We knew our inside game would be our strength, I was worried about our outside game," Nance said. "We haven't shot the ball well in all games. We've had streaks where we shot it well during a game. We need someone to step up."

The SWR boys come in 3-6, but the Cougars have split their past four games, getting wins over East Davidson and Jordan-Matthews.

"We always enjoy competing," SWR coach Matt Kiser said. "It's good you get to see someone different, someone not on your schedule normally. And it's good to get some practice in. Games are so packed in, you don't get a lot of time to practice and work on the things you know you need to work on."

The Tigers are a perfect 8-0 on the season after finishing 23-6 with a Piedmont Athletic Conference championship a year ago.

"We've been talking a lot about when you're a pretty good team coming off a good run last year, teams are going to take a shot at you," RHS coach Daniel Mitchell said.

"Really, really good teams meet that challenge. They meet the challenge of those teams who play different styles. You want to enjoy the process of being challenged."

The Trinity boys have dropped five in a row and will bring a 3-8 record into the tournament.

On the girls side, SWR comes in as one of the favorites. The Cougars are undefeated at 8-0, including a win over Randleman. The Cougars have yet to be tested as their closest game was that 17-point win over Randleman Friday night.

"We always look forward to it, it's a very important part of our schedule" SWR coach Seth Baxter said of the holiday tournament. "I really like that we're not in the same conference as everyone. It will give us a chance to see some different competition and for us, we want to see how we react."

The AHS girls are 2-6 this season after a pair of recent wins over Southern Alamance. If the Blue Comets are going to compete, they are going to have to find some offense as they are averaging under 22 points per game.

Trinity, which was winless last season, got off to a solid start at 6-2. Three straight losses means THS enters the tournament at 6-5.

The Randleman Tigers are 5-4 this year and saw a 40-game conference winning streak end with the loss to SWR Friday.