

Springville has a habit of peaking at the right time and it's happening again.

Now, with a second straight impressive victory in this year's state tournament, the top-ranked Orioles have to chance to win their third consecutive Class 1A championship.

Springville used two big scoring runs to beat No. 7 Exira/Elk Horn-Kimballton 57-41 and advance to Saturday night's title game. The Orioles, who beat Algona Bishop Garrigan 54-36 in their tournament opener, played good defense, shared the ball on offense and when they got good shots, they usually made them.

The senior trio of Mikayla Nachazel, Madi Wagaman and Rylee Menster again led the way for the Orioles, who had assists on 15 of their 23 field goals and came up with 15 steals.

Nachazel scored 15 points and had four steals, Wagaman scored 13 and Menster had 12 points to go with five steals. Springville outscored the Spartans 22-10 in the paint and scored 33 points off turnovers.

Sophia Peppers led Exira/Elk Horn-Kimballton with 13 points and seven rebounds in her final high school game. She'll play at Morningside next season. Ellie Schultes and Kamryn Waymire each scored eight points for the Spartans, while Kealey Nelson had six points and seven rebounds.

The game was close for the first few minutes and Exira/EHK led 17-15 after Schultes hit a 3-pointer. Wagaman quickly answered with a jumper and not long after that, Springville was ahead to stay.

Reserve Melissa Nulle contributed a couple of baskets as Springville finished the half on a 14-1 run to go up 29-18. Then, with the lead at eight in the third quarter, Alyssa Jaeger hit a jumper to start a 16-5 burst that included baskets from six different players.

That stretched the lead to 48-29 and the Orioles were never threatened again.

Springville will take a 24-3 record into the title game at 7 p.m. Saturday, a contest that will conclude this year's tournament. Exira/EHK finishes 24-2 and its senior class goes out with an impressive four-year mark of 96-6.

