

Newell-Fonda will end its season in a familiar setting.

The Mustangs are going back to the Class 1A championship game.

In a battle of unbeaten, Olivia Larsen came up with another big performance as fourth-ranked Newell-Fonda turned back a second-half rally by No. 2 Central Decatur and won 61-49 to complete the semifinal round of this year's state tournament.

Newell-Fonda will take a 26-0 record against two-time defending champion Springville in the title game at 7 p.m. Saturday. It's the seventh appearance in the finals for the Mustangs, who beat Springville for the 2015 title. Springville, ranked No. 1, hasn't lost at the state tournament since.

Following up on a 28-point outing in the quarterfinals, Larsen scored 23 points, grabbed six rebounds and made four steals. Emma Stewart scored 12 for the Mustangs and Megan Morenz 11, including a key 3-pointer to help blunt Central Decatur's comeback.

Emma Atwood led Central Decatur with 18 points, while Alli Masters had 15 points, 10 rebounds and seven steals.

Larsen dominated the first half with 17 points to help her team build a 35-22 lead. But if the Mustangs felt they were safely ahead, Central Decatur quickly changed that thinking.

The Cardinals twice cut the lead to three points, the second time at 40-37 on Alliey Boswell's 3-pointer. Newell-Fonda needed an answer and Larsen provided it.

She grabbed a rebound and drove the length of the court for a layup, then fed Morenz for a layup. Morenz in turn found Camryn Wilken with a pass and Wilken buried a 3-pointer for a 47-38 lead with 1:13 left in the third quarter.

The lead never fell below seven after that.

Central Decatur concludes a memorable season with a 25-1 record. And the best news for the Cardinals: All five starters are juniors, so they'll likely be heard from again.

Until then, the champions from the last three years will go head-to-head to see which one wins again.