

With Rachel Leerar driving to the basket and Amanda Chizek dominating inside, West Hancock was too much for Montezuma.

And now the second-ranked Eagles are heading to their first state championship game.

Leerar's 25 points led the way as West Hancock beat Montezuma 59-50 to complete the final championship pairing of this year's tournament. The Eagles improve to 25-1 and will play top-ranked Newell-Fonda for the title at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Montezuma had been hoping to play for the title on the night the school's 1969 state championship team will be honored. But the Bravettes couldn't cut off Leerar's drives to the basket or keep Chizek off the boards and finished 22-3.

West Hancock will try to win it with a team that has no seniors. Leerar, a sophomore, made 11 of 19 shots, grabbed seven rebounds and handed out six assists. Chizek, a 6-foot junior, scored 12 points, hauled in 17 rebounds and handed out four assists.

Shateah Wetering, a junior who has committed to the University of Iowa, led Montezuma with 14 points and nine rebounds. Riley Gatton added 12 points for the Bravettes, who rallied three times to tie the score but could never get the lead.

A key stretch came at the start of the fourth quarter when Chizek was on the bench with four fouls. The Bravettes got the ball inside repeatedly but could manage only one basket while she was out.

Chizek returned with her team leading 44-41 and quickly made her presence felt. She got the ball twice in the high post and bounced passes to a cutting Leerar for layups. A short time later, Leerar returned the favor with a pass to Chizek for a layup and Riley Hiscocks followed with yet another layup.

That made it 55-45 and it wasn't long before the Eagles, who shot 70 percent in the final quarter, were celebrating their trip to the finals.