

Cascade passed another test in its bid to win a second consecutive Class 2A championship and now it's time for a rematch.

Playing its usual stingy defense, Cascade beat a talented Dike-New Hartford team 52-43 to earn a semifinal berth against top-ranked Grundy Center, the team the Cougars beat in last year's championship game.

Cascade built a 33-20 halftime lead and held on despite making only four baskets in the second half, all by Abby Welter. But the Cougars made enough free throws to keep the lead and shut down the Wolverines after they drew to 48-43 on Sophia Hoffman's baseline jumper with 1:28 left.

Nicole McDermott answered with a pair of free throws and Welter sank two more for the final margin.

Welter led Cascade with 17 points, McDermott scored 15 and Jordan Simon had 13. Welter and McDermott both grabbed six rebounds and Simon came up with four steals.

Ellie Foster led Dike-New Hartford with 20 points. Morgan Weber added 14 points and 11 rebounds and Katie Knock scored eight for the Wolverines, who hit eight 3-pointers but shot just 29.8 percent overall. Foster, Weber and Knock accounted for all 14 of Dike-New Hartford's field goals.

Cascade takes a 23-1 record and 21-game winning streak against unbeaten Grundy Center at 10 a.m. Friday. The Cougars beat Grundy 41-37 in last year's title game.

Dike-New Hartford, which also lost to Cascade in the state quarterfinals a year ago, finishes 20-3.