

Many teams would get rattled after giving up a 13-point lead. Sioux City Bishop Heelan found a way to stay the course.

Bishop Heelan turned back repeated Grinnell threats after regaining the lead and beat the Tigers 55-46 to complete the Class 4A quarterfinals. In their return to state after a three-year absence, the Crusaders move into a semifinal game at 6:45 p.m. Thursday against North Scott.

Season scoring leader Ella Skinner topped Heelan with 14 points and Amber Aesoph came off the bench to score 13 on 5-for-8 shooting. Katie Cooke added 10 points for the youthful Crusaders, who have only one senior.

Taking advantage of eight Grinnell turnovers in the first quarter, Heelan jumped on top early and led 26-13 midway through the second quarter. Grinnell then stormed back with a 15-2 run to tie it at halftime and give the Tigers a huge momentum boost heading into the second half.

But Heelan refused to fold. Aesoph's two free throws near the end of the third quarter broke a 40-40 tie and Skinner drove strong to the basket for a hoop in the opening seconds of the fourth quarter for a 44-40 lead.

The Crusaders then turned to their defense, shutting off Grinnell's perimeter shooters and holding the Tigers to three baskets the rest of the way.

Macy Harris led Grinnell with 13 points, nine rebounds and four assists. Rebekah McCombs scored 11 for the Tigers and Meredith McKnight added 10. After McKnight hit a 3-pointer from the left wing to tie the score at 38, Harris was the only Grinnell player to score from then on.

Bishop Heelan advances with a 19-5 record. Grinnell, last year's state runner-up, goes home at 19-3.