

The 100th state tournament began with an entertaining, up-and-down game that, for a while, had the makings of a major upset.

But top-seeded Johnston survived eighth-seeded Urbandale's early blitz and rallied for a 66-57 victory in Class 5A play.

Urbandale stormed to a 41-23 halftime lead on the strength of its quickness and 59 percent shooting. But Johnston did not crack.

The Dragons, who beat Urbandale twice during the regular season, began chipping away early in the second half, then went on a 20-2 run that, in the end, dashed the J-Hawks' upset hopes.

Maya McDermott's 3-pointer after Maddie Mock's steal gave Johnston its first lead at 53-52 with 4:46 left. The Dragons then wrapped it up at the line, making 13 of 16 in the final 4:03.

Urbandale, in the tournament for the first time since 1994, drew to 56-55 on DeeDee Pryor's 3 with 2:10 remaining, but the J-Hawks didn't score again until the closing seconds. Johnston turned up its defensive pressure on the perimeter in the second half and held Urbandale to 16 points in the final two quarters.

McDermott, a junior who has committed to Northern Iowa, led Johnston with 22 points while playing all 32 minutes. Kendall Nead added 14 points and Regan Nesheim scored 14.

Pryor, who has signed with Creighton, finished with 16 points and eight rebounds to lead Urbandale. Freshman Jada Gyamfi scored 12 points, while Maya Gyamfi and Faith Putz each had eight.

Johnston, making its fifth straight trip to state, takes a 22-2 record into the finals at 10 a.m. Thursday. Urbandale finishes 13-10.