

Bishop Garrigan hasn't faced many challenges in its dominating season, but the top-ranked Golden Bears received a stiff one from Springville.

They survived, getting 25 points and 10 rebounds from super sophomore Audi Crooks and winning 48-42 to open Class 1A action in the 2021 state tournament. Bishop Garrigan built an early nine-point lead, fell behind in the third quarter, then got the ball inside to the 6-foot-3 Crooks to build the cushion it needed to hold off the eighth-ranked Orioles and advance to the semifinals for the second straight year.

Crooks, who already has drawn the attention of power conference coaches from across the country, made her first six shots, missed one at the start of the second half and then never missed again, finishing 12-for-13 despite Springville's attempts to surround her in the low post. She also blocked six shots, intimidated the shooter on several others and made two steals.

Molly Joyce, also a sophomore, added 13 points and sank 6-of-8 free throws in the final 1:20 to protect the lead. Senior Katleyn Meyers provided a steadying influence with seven points, nine rebounds and six assists.

Lauren Wilson, a 6-foot junior, did not back down in challenging Crooks and led Springville with 13 points. She added to that with nine rebounds, four assists and two steals. Grace Matus scored nine points for the Orioles, while Molly Stamp, Morgan Nachazel and Hannah March each scored six. Springville forced 24 turnovers with its aggressive defense but the Orioles committed 21 themselves and shot just 26 percent.

Springville sliced a nine-point Garrigan lead to 23-19 by halftime and pulled ahead 29-27 after successive 3-pointers by Matus and Nachazel midway through the third quarter. The score was tied three times after that before Meyers fed reserve Abbie Capesius for a layup that put Bishop Garrigan up 35-33.

Joyce flipped an underhand pass to Crooks for a layup that made it 37-33 and another Crooks basket inside in the first minute of the fourth quarter stretched the lead to 39-33. Springville pulled to 41-39 with 1:45 left, then had to start fouling and Bishop Garrigan, last year's state runner-up, wrapped it up on free throws.

Garrigan, which had only two other victories decided by fewer than 10 points, will take a 24-1 record into a semifinal game at 2 p.m. Friday. The Golden Bears' only loss was to Class 5A West Des Moines Valley in their final regular-season game.

Springville, in the tournament for the eighth time in 13 seasons, started four juniors and a sophomore so the Orioles will be heard from again. They finish 21-5.