

Newell-Fonda gets a lot of points off steals and fastbreaks, but the Mustangs also are very good at something else.

They pass the ball well, too, and that was evident in their latest victory, a 73-34 romp past Montezuma that sends the two-time defending champions back to the Class 1A title game.

Newell-Fonda will see a familiar opponent in the finals -- the same Bishop Garrigan team the Mustangs defeated 65-63 for last year's championship. They'll meet again at 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

They also faced off in a regular-season game back on Dec. 10, Bishop Garrigan winning 66-45 and holding the Mustangs to their fewest points of the season by far. Newell-Fonda beat Montezuma with its usual formula of harassing defense and quick scoring bursts. The Mustangs forced 24 turnovers, made 17 steals and had assists on 20 of their 31 baskets, many coming with crisp passing on fastbreaks.

Bailey Sievers led with 15 points, four assists and four steals. Macy Sievers added 12 points, six assists and three steals, Mary Walker scored 12 points and Maggie Walker had 11. Ella Larsen grabbed eight rebounds and scored five points.

The Mustangs, now 25-1, should be fresh for the championship game because no one played more than 19 minutes. For the second time in as many tournament games, coach Dick Jungers got all 15 of his players into the game.

Montezuma had to grind out a 50-45 victory over Saint Ansgar in the quarterfinals and just couldn't keep up in this one. Elise Boulton led the Bravettes with nine points and Kierstyn Price scored seven.

Montezuma, which finished 23-2, seemed to be holding its own early, yet when the first quarter ended, Newell-Fonda led 28-10. The Mustangs held Montezuma without a field goal in the second quarter in stretching its lead to 42-20, then outscored the Bravettes 17-3 in the third quarter, which ended with 13 straight Newell-Fonda points.

This will be Newell-Fonda's ninth appearance in the championship game, all since 1997. The Mustangs have captured three titles in all, also winning in 2015.