

A big run in the first half sent West Branch to the Class 2A semifinals.

The third-ranked Bears ran off 15 straight points to wipe out an early Grundy Center lead and went on to a 49-33 victory to complete the 2A quarterfinals.

It was the first victory in four state tournament games for the Bears, who will take a 21-1 record against No. 2 Dike-New Hartford in a semifinal game at noon on Friday. Eighth-ranked Grundy Center, back at state after runner-up finishes in 2018 and 2019, brought an all-junior starting lineup to Wells Fargo Arena and finished 19-4.

Grundy Center led 6-4 midway through the first quarter, but once West Branch built some momentum, there was little the Spartans could do to stop it.

Everyone in the lineup scored as the Bears started a 21-3 run with 15 straight points and opened a 25-9 lead. Grundy Center went 8 minutes without a point before Bailey Reding slipped along the baseline for a layup with 31 seconds left in the opening half, leaving the Bears ahead 25-11 at the break.

Sasha Koenig's stop-and-pop 3-pointer early in the third quarter made it 28-11 and the Bears eventually led by as many as 22, forcing Grundy Center into difficult shots and scoring on a mixture of 3-pointers and layups.

Koenig led the way with 16 points, including 4-for-9 shooting from 3-point range. She also grabbed seven rebounds and handed out six assists.

The four other starters did their part as well. Delaynie Luneckas had a double-double with 13 points and 12 rebounds, while Taya Young had seven points, six rebounds and three steals. Rylan Druecker contributed seven points and five rebounds and Lexie Peak had six points, two rebounds and four assists.

Reding went 4-for-7 on 3-pointers for Grundy Center and led the Spartans with 16 points. Teammate Paiton Wallis had six points and six rebounds, while Lainy Thoren had five points and eight rebounds.