

Dike-New Hartford found its shooting touch just in time to win a state championship.

Shackled for three quarters by Maquoketa Valley's zone defense, the Wolverines outscored the Wildcats 22-9 in the fourth to claim a 47-42 victory in a battle of unbeaten teams and win the Class 2A state championship.

Dike-New Hartford rallied from 11 points down in the third quarter to grab the lead early in the fourth quarter, then survived some shaky free throw shooting down the stretch to add the basketball title to the 2A volleyball championship it won in November.

Taylor Kvale, a 5-foot-3 junior, made the key plays to get the Wolverines (26-0) back in it and finished with 12 points. Ellary Knock also scored 12, Payton Petersen and Sophia Hoffmann added eight each and Paula Gonzalez scored six, including a key 3-pointer midway through the fourth quarter.

Petersen, a freshman, was named captain of the all-tournament team after receiving that same honor in volleyball.

Taya Tucker led Maquoketa Valley (25-1) with 14 points and 11 rebounds, Ella Imler scored 11 and Kylie Chesnut added nine. Tucker hurt Dike-New Hartford with a big first half, making 5-of-6 shots, but the Wolverines held her scoreless over the final two quarters.

With Maquoketa Valley leading 33-22, Kvale hit a 3-pointer in the final minute of the third quarter, then struck quickly in the opening seconds of the final period, knocking down another 3 and stealing the inbounds pass for a layup. Suddenly, the lead was down to 33-30 and the Wolverines kept coming.

Hoffmann fed Knock for a layup and Knock hit a 3-pointer 34 seconds later, putting Dike-New Hartford ahead to stay at 37-35. Gonzalez nailed a long 3 from the right wing for a 41-36 lead with 3:38 and the Wolverines needed every point of that margin to survive.

After missing 13 of 16 free throws in the quarter, the Wolverines finally nailed it down when Knock made two with 19.7 seconds remaining and Hoffmann -- who had been 0-for-9 at the line -- sank two more with 5.9 seconds remaining.

Along with hitting some key shots, Dike-New Hartford tightened its defense, holding Maquoketa Valley to just two field goals in the final 9:54.

The basketball championship was the first for the Dike-New Hartford program. Dike won the six-player title in 1988. The Wolverines started only one senior so they should be title contenders again next season.

Knock, Tucker, Imler, West Branch's Sasha Koenig and Nodaway Valley's Maddax DeVault joined Petersen on the all-tournament team.