

It'll be a rematch for the Class 5A state championship.

Defending champion Johnston completed the title game pairing with a 52-47 victory over Iowa City West, holding on after leading by 16 in the first half. The second-ranked Dragons will play No. 1 Waukee, the team they beat in last year's title game, for the 2021 crown at 7 o'clock Friday night. Waukee advanced with a 50-29 victory over Ankeny Centennial.

The two CIML rivals met twice in the regular season and split, Johnston winning 51-45 on Jan. 8 and Waukee prevailing 58-40 Feb. 4.

Johnston made it back with a young team that starts only one senior, getting most of its production in the semifinal win from juniors Jada Gyamfi and Zoey Buchan and freshmen Aaliyah Riley and Alli Tanke.

Gyamfi, who has committed to the University of Iowa, scored 11 points and grabbed 18 rebounds for her second double-double of the tournament. She had 19 points and 18 rebounds in a quarterfinal victory over Cedar Falls.

Riley made all six of her free throws in scoring 10 points. Buchan and Tanke each scored nine for the Dragons, who'll take a 19-1 record into the finals.

Audrey Koch led West with 16 points on near-perfect shooting -- 4-for-5 from the field and 8-for-9 on free throws. Malayia Tellis scored 10 points for the Trojans and Emma Ingersoll-Wang had six points and six rebounds.

Johnston went on a 21-3 run to open a 27-11 lead midway through the second quarter and seemed on its way to a rout. West did not let that happen.

The Trojans got the lead down to 29-21 at halftime, continued to chip away in the second half and had a chance to tie it after Koch sank two free throws with 2:07 left, leaving the Trojans trailing 45-43. Tellis then stole the ball on Johnston's inbound pass, but Ingersoll-Wang missed a shot, Gyamfi grabbed the rebound and fired the ball down the floor to Tanke for a breakaway layup.

After another West miss, Riley made two free throws for a 49-43 lead and that was enough.

West won state titles in 2012 and 2018 but couldn't find the offense it needed for a chance at a third championship and finished 14-4.