

Some clutch play down the stretch carried Monticello into the Class 3A semifinals. Lauren Ries scored 22 points on 7-for-10 shooting and the ninth-ranked Panthers beat No. 5 Clear Lake 61-50 in their second straight major upset. Monticello had defeated No. 4 Osage 59-33 to punch its ticket to state, the school's first trip since 2011.

Promising sophomore Jordan Kuper added 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Panthers, while Taylor McDonald sank all eight of her free throws en route to 14 points.

McDonald scored six points in a 10-2 run that gave Monticello a 33-24 lead late in the first half and the Panthers answered with a score every time the Lions threatened in the second half.

Clear Lake got within one possession of the lead when Lexi Fasbender hit a 3 to cut the lead to 51-48 with four minutes left. Again, the Panthers responded while holding the Lions to one basket the rest of the way.

The 6-foot-2 Kuper got a bucket inside, then fed Maddie Lambert for a layup that made it 55-48. McDonald did the rest at the free throw line, making six straight in the final 1:32 to finish it off.

Jordyn Barragy led Clear Lake with 20 points and 13 rebounds, while Sara Faber scored 12 and Fasbender had 10.

Ries had a solid all-around game for Monticello, going 3-for-4 from 3-point range and adding four steals, four rebounds and two assists.

Monticello is now 20-5 and will play again at 6:45 p.m. Thursday. Clear Lake, the North Central Conference champion, finishes 22-3. The Lions' other losses were to top-ranked Crestwood and Class 4A state tournament qualifier Mason City.