

## Record

vs Valley W 60-37  
 @ Waukee W 51-45  
 vs DSM North W 78-47  
 vs Southeast Polk W 57-44  
 vs Dowling Catholic W 61-44  
 @ Ames W 71-54  
 @ Mason City W 75-42  
 @ Valley W 45-34  
 @ Sioux City East W 67-54  
 @ Urbandale W 51-35  
 @ Marshalltown W 66-13  
 vs Waukee L 40-58  
 vs DSM Lincoln W 76-20

@ Dowling Catholic W 76-63  
 vs Gilbert W 64-50  
 vs DSM Lincoln  
 (Substate Semi-Final) W 71-22  
 vs Indianola  
 (Substate Final) W 84-61  
 vs Cedar Falls  
 (State Quarterfinal) W 71-64  
 vs Iowa City West  
 (State Semi-Final) W 52-47  
 vs Waukee  
 (State Championship) L 43-71



Driving in on Waukee's Lindsey Kelderman during the state championship is junior Anna Gossling. Returning for a third year on varsity, she was an all-around game. Averaging 8.1 ppg, 2.5 rpg, and 2.5 apg. Known for her point shot, Gossling shot 37% from 3, 42.3% from the free-throw line, and led the CIML in free throw percentage (81.3%) in and night out, Gossling was assigned to the team's best player. Holding multiple girls below her in age, she was one of the best defenders for the team and arguably one of the best in the state. She earned All-Conference 2nd Team.

1. Bringing the ball up the court during the season opener vs the Valley Tigers is junior guard, Zoey Buchan. Following the departure of Maya McDermott, Buchan was given the reins to be the primary point guard of the Dragon offense. Averaging 5.2 ppg and 2.2 apg, she led the CIML in 3-point percentage (56.4) and effective field goal percentage (70.6). Following her productive year as a starter, Buchan earned Honorable Mention All Conference.

2. Awaiting a move from IC West's Audrey Koch, is stellar freshman, Aili Tanke. Coming into her freshman season, Tanke had a big role to fill, and she did not disappoint. Putting up 12.4 ppg, 4 rpg and 1.5 apg, she shot a team high 54.7% from the floor and 51.3% from 3 (third in Class 5A). Tanke went on a tear in the state tournament, earning a spot on the All Tournament Team and putting up 30 points over the course of three games. She also earned All-Conference 1st Team honors.

3. Fiercely driving to the hoop for a contested layup in the state semi-final is freshman Aaliyah Riley. Regarded as the sixth man in the lineup, the second Riley stepped on the court, she ignited a spark for the Dragons scoring 7.6 ppg, pulling down 2.2 rpg and dishing out 2.6 apg. Not only did she spark the offense, she created multiple turnovers all year long, leading the team with 29 steals.

4. Sophomore Molly Noelck, a lethal 3-point shooter, leaps into traffic during the state semi-final. Although it may not show up on the stat sheet, whenever the Dragons needed a big shot, Noelck was your girl. Ranking third in the CIML in 3-point percentage, the sophomore lit it up from deep, shooting 50% from behind the arc.



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Job # 3292 School Johnston High School

Special Instructions

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Process 4-Color (CMYK)

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# championch caliber reload championship

## Team overcomes loss of Big 3

The clock had hit zeros, it was official, the Dragons had advanced to their second straight state championship after defeating the Trojans of Iowa City West. Now they would face off against the top-ranked Waukee Warriors in a rematch of last year's title game. Making the championship game was amazing, but it might be a bit more impressive following the departure of superstar seniors Maya McDermott, Kendal Nead and Maddie Mock. The Dragons took on a new look with a chance to hoist another trophy.

Big shoes had been left to fill after the "Big 3" graduated. The question was who would step up? Jada Gyamfi, Aili Tanke and Aaliyah Riley. "I think the biggest part was finding a spot where they needed someone to step up, just doing what I had to do, and getting more comfortable in doing that," Tanke said. Not only did these three take on massive roles, but they all did it in their first year with the program. Gyamfi, transferred over from cross-town rival Urbandale and Tanke and Riley both were freshmen. "Everyone was really welcoming, really nice, I think we all had a great bond and chemistry, and it definitely showed on the court," Tanke said.

The Dragons surged onto the scene, exploding out to an 11-0 start including a win in the Waukee fieldhouse. In a tight knit contest, the Dragons controlled it for nearly the entire game, constantly being one step ahead of the Warriors. Gyamfi finished with 16 points and Tanke with 15. It was very clear from this game on, those two were to be feared on the offensive end of the floor.

Steam rolling multiple opponents, the Dragons fired on all cylinders and looked unstoppable. But a second regular-season date with Waukee did not end well for the home team. "Going into that game we all just had a really funky feeling," Gyamfi said. "It's almost like we knew we were going to lose. We had a terrible game, we played so bad, we didn't even look like the same team, but we really didn't let it affect us at all." Falling 58-40 and suffering their first loss, this was certainly a game that could have sent their season into a downward spiral.

Instead, the Dragons used that game as fire. With a berth at state on the line, Johnston rose to the occasion. "The most pressure-packed game that you're gonna play in the season is the regional final, especially if you're playing at home, and you're the higher seed, and you're expected to win," Coach Chad Jilek said. "But we got over that hump, and I told the girls that's the most pressure, but now it's fun, now you made it." Winning in dominant fashion 84-61 over Indianola, Johnston had advanced to their seventh straight state tournament, behind the blazing hot junior guard, Anna Gossling, who dropped a season high 24 points, shooting 5/7 from deep.

After two close games against Cedar Falls and Iowa City West, with the lights shining bright, Johnston would compete for a shot to go back-to-back. "I couldn't believe we made it to a state championship game, like these were things I used to dream about," Gyamfi said.

The feel of the game was not like a normal game. "It definitely wasn't like a regular game," Riley said. "It was way different, people were yelling from every direction, it was just really chaotic."

Unfortunately, for the Dragons their quest to be back-to-back champs had fallen just one game short, losing 71-43. "It meant a lot to be there, especially because a lot of people had their doubts about us after losing our three best scorers, and so being able to prove them wrong and get to the championship, it felt great," Tanke said.

Fighting through contact for a tough layup is standout junior, Jada Gyamfi. The Iowa commit was a monster for the Dragons in every aspect of the game. Gyamfi finished the year with 13.7 ppg, 7.6 rpg and 2 asg. She led the CIML in free throws made and attempted (55, 82) and defensive rebounds (111). She also finished second in the CIML in points (274), rebounds (152) and field goals made (102). Two of Gyamfi's most dominant games took place at the state tournament, putting up 19 and 18, and 11 and 21 setting the Class 5A state tournament record for total rebounds. She earned All-Conference 1st Team (unanimous), and was named to the All Tournament Team.



Realization sets in for the team, after they advanced to their second consecutive state championship game, following a 52-47 win over Iowa City West. "It's satisfaction for all of the hard work the players put in year round," coach Chad Jilek said. "The success inspires our youth players and our incoming freshmen to keep that tradition going." Only one other 5A school has qualified for seven straight state tournaments, and Johnston is the only 5A school to make the semifinals four years-in-a-row, and just the third to play in consecutive championship games. In the words of Jilek, "Success breeds success."

055  
girls basketball

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