

Ron Manson/The Covington News

Last second advice: Ron Bradley pulls Justin Herring (10) aside in the closing seconds of Newton's three-point loss at Rockdale County Tuesday night.

Bradley denied 1,255th win

Rockdale Co. upsets sixth-ranked Rams

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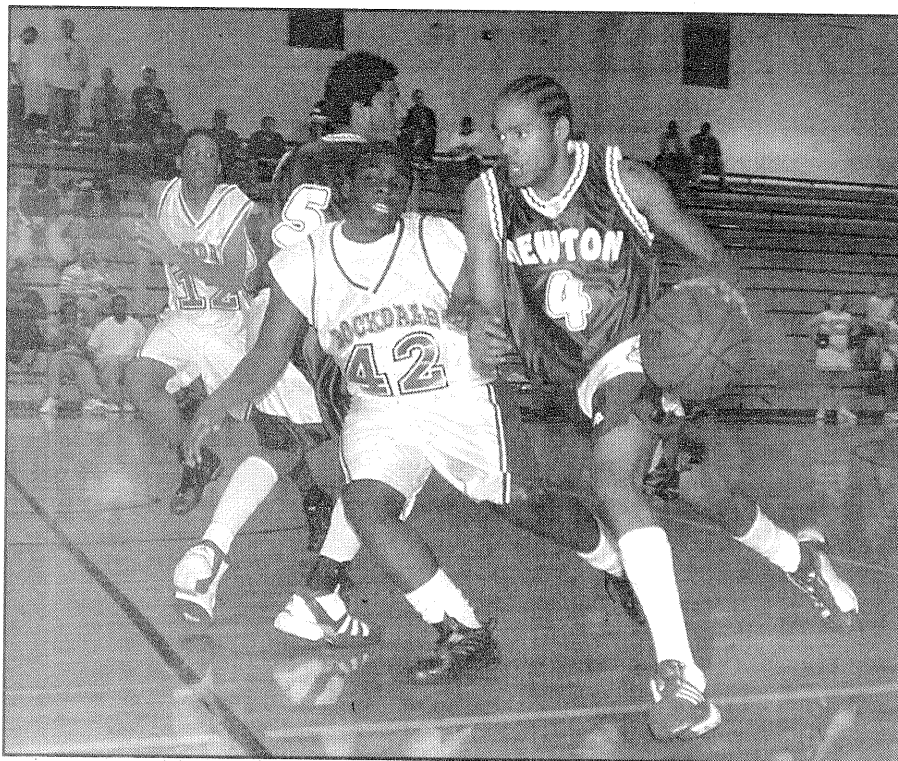
CONYERS — D.B. Carroll's record is safe, at least for one more game.

Rockdale County stunned the sixth-ranked Newton boys' basketball team 67-64 Tuesday evening at Rockdale County High School, denying Newton head coach Ron Bradley in his first bid to pass Carroll as the state's all-time career wins leader.

In a game that went from dull to flat-out riveting, the Rams roared back from 12 points down in the fourth period to grab a 60-59 edge with 1:57 left, only to be turned away.

"It's easy to have alibis, but it was an extremely strange ball game," Bradley said. "We only had two guys go to the free throw line; they had nine. They pressed us all night, and we shot 13 free throws; we sat in a zone most of the night and they shot 37. It's not hard to figure out."

The Rams (16-6, 6-1 subregion) lost their cool and ultimately the game at the foul line, where they missed nine



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Using the dribble: Newton's Legale Floyd (4) uses a Tyrone Brown (5) screen to drive by Rockdale County's Brian Daniels (42).

attempts — eight in the fourth quarter alone. Legale Floyd, who entered the game having made 28 straight at the

line, went 2-for-7.

"That's just about the ball game right there," Bradley said. "If you can't

make free throws in big games, it's tough to win."

Down 53-41 with 7:45 to play, Newton made a remarkable run to get back in the game, scoring 19 points in under six minutes to claim a one-point lead with 1:57 to go. The Rams coughed up the lead on the next possession, fell behind by three in the closing seconds and watched their five-game winning streak burn before them. Floyd had a chance to tie it at the horn but misfired on an open three-pointer.

Rockdale County shot a blistering 19-for-28 from the field and outrebounded Newton by a 29-24 count.

"They got every break in the book, but you've got to give them credit," Bradley said. "They played an awesome game. And it wasn't just one player; it was the whole team."

Floyd poured in a game-high 22 points for the Rams, who lost for only the second time in 12 games. Antwone Smith pitched in with 17 points before fouling out, and Darius White chipped in with 15 points, highlighting his team's fourth-quarter surge with a dramatic four-point play.

The Rams return to the court at 8:30 p.m. Friday against Eastside at Eastside High School.