



Ron Manson/The Covington News

Newton boys' basketball head coach Ron Bradley, second from right, is presented with a special plaque by Newton High School Principal Dave Easterday, far right, and a commemorative cake by Becky Rutledge, center, after the Rams defeated Heritage 54-32 Friday night. The win gave Bradley 900 wins as a boys' basketball coach, making him just the ninth man in United States history to reach the plateau.

One win from history

Brian Knapp
Sports Editor

Ron Bradley shook hands with D.B. Carroll for the first time in 1961, two beautiful minds in the celestial skies of the high school basketball coaching universe. Carroll stood more than six feet above the court, wore a neatly pressed suit and tie and prided himself

on running a first-class program.

He impressed Bradley with how he carried himself.

"I welcomed him to our school," Bradley said. "He asked me where the bathroom was. Shows you what kind of impression I made."

Long lost laughs aside, Ronald M. Bradley can pass D.B. Carroll in the record books as the state's all-time

winningest prep coach (combined boys and girls) when the Newton boys' basketball team plays Rockdale County at 7:30 p.m. tonight at Rockdale County High School in Conyers.

Carroll will be on his mind.

"I have a lot of vivid memories of him," Bradley said. "His girls were all

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the rage back then."

Bradley pulled even with the late Pickens County coach Saturday, recording his 1,254th career victory with a 47-point rout of Jackson County. Still, after 43 years on the sideline, he knows the record will not

fall without one last fight.

"We thought it was a goal when we started," Bradley said. "It's something we've always known we'd like to be a part of. When you consider all the thousands of coaches who have coached in this state, to be the winningest of them all would be real special."

Newton is currently 16-5

under Bradley's watch and has opened up a two-game lead over Eastside and Salem in the south subregion. His current players, while aware of the achievement, have avoided getting caught in the hoopla surrounding it.

"I think they're wrapped up in their own season, and that's where my emphasis is,"

Bradley said. "I don't want them to feel like this season is about me. This team is bigger than the record."

That said, he is approaching a landmark milestone.

Bradley has won 901 games as a boys coach and 353 as a girls coach since his illustrious career began in 1958, posting 36 20-win seasons. He is now

more than 200 wins ahead of his nearest active competitor, Lowndes County's Cliff Ranew. He has three state championships on his résumé, including the often-talked-about title with Newton in 1964.

"I heard once that if you want to have a happy life, you've got to have happy

memories," Bradley said. "I've got a lot of happy memories here."

Bradley moved into another exclusive club last Friday, becoming the ninth man in United States history to reach 900 wins as a boys' basketball coach with a 54-32 victory over Heritage at Newton High School.