

Bradley seeks another historic win

Newton head coach one win away from state boys' record

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Ron Bradley, the legendary head coach of the Newton High School boys' basketball team, can meet up with history yet again at 7:30 p.m. tonight when the Rams square off with Salem at Salem High School in Conyers.

With one more victory, Bradley will supplant the late Eric Staples as the winningest high school boys' basketball coach in state history. Established during a golden era at Perry High School (1933-65), Staples' record of 924 wins has stood for more than four decades.

Directions to the game

Take I-20 west to Exit 84 (Salem Road) and turn left. Travel approximately three miles to traffic light at Old Salem Road, and turn right onto Old Salem Road. Travel approximately one and a half miles to first traffic light. Turn left onto Underwood Road. Salem High School will be on the right, approximately half a mile down Underwood Road.

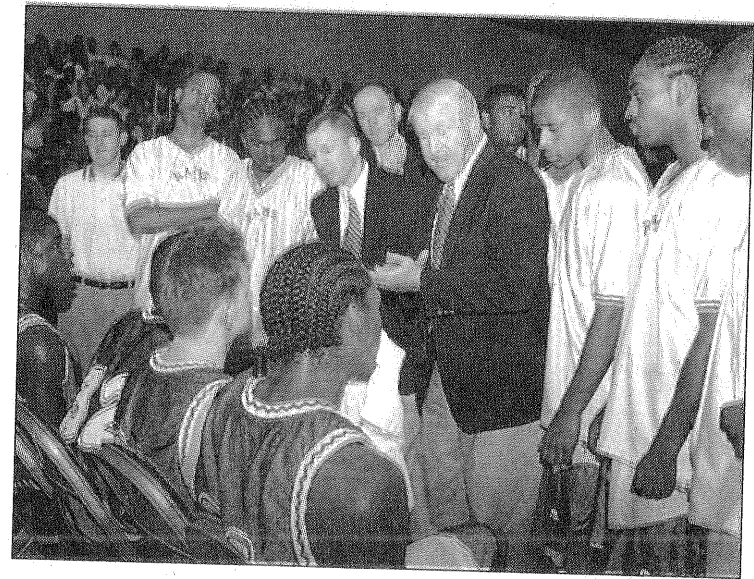
Staples coached during a unique period. "They never locked the gym doors," Bradley said. "You could come in and shoot any time you wanted, and his teams certainly showed the effects of that. That

was back when times were a lot slower and everything revolved around what was going on at the high schools."

Should Bradley record his historic 925th victory as a boys' coach, he would also move into seventh place nationally behind only Morgan Wooten (1,242), Robert Hughes (1,217), Ralph Tasker (1,122), Bill Krueger (1,096), Leslie Gaudet (1,026) and Walter Van Huss (1,021). It would also establish him as the winningest coach in any varsity sport in state history.

"These records are special to a lot of people," Bradley said. "They were born a half century ago. It's just a shame some of those people who enabled us to be successful aren't around anymore. When things are important to someone else, they

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Anthony Banks/The Covington News
Newton High School boys' basketball coach Ron Bradley gives his team instructions during a timeout of the first meeting of Eastside and Newton in early January. With a win at Salem tonight, Bradley would become the state's winningest boys coach.

Bradley: Credits wife for success

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become important to you."

Staples was granted induction into the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2002. He won 25 region titles and eight state championships, posting a career record that stands 726 games above .500.

"He was a scholarly gentleman who was well-respected," said Bradley, who coached Staples' son, Lee, in the 1961 GACA North-South All-Star Game. "I learned a lot from a distance about how success is handled."

Newton, the defending Region 8-AAAA champion, is off to a 17-6 start under Bradley this season. The Rams defeated cross-town rival Eastside 59-57 Friday night, giving

Bradley his record-tying 924th win as a boys' coach.

"I'd like for them to feel like they're a part of it," Bradley said. "They were there the night it happened."

This would be the second significant milestone Bradley has passed in little more than a year. He moved past D.B. Carroll as the state's all-time win-

ningest high school basketball coach (boys and girls) with his 1,255th career victory last January.

Bradley credits his wife, Jan, for much of his success.

"I've coached in over 1600 games, and she's only missed five of them," Bradley said. "No one knows what she's put into it."