

~~LOGAN-~~ NASH-VILLE

Wes and Robbie Nash have the Devils soaring

By WES SWIETEK
Sports Editor

LOGANVILLE — It's 2 a.m. on a warm summer night in Loganville.

Robbie Nash feels like playing some basketball.

Who does he call?

His best friend since fifth grade.

One of the only guys in the neighborhood who can challenge him, Wes Nash.

The one-on-one game goes on until the morning sun shines on the worn orange rim.

It's somewhat ironic that the pair of Loganville basketball stars would share a last name and much more — a love of basketball, a friendship, a hometown — and yet be unrelated.

Wes moved to Loganville from Snellville while in the fifth grade.

Robbie had no rival in the Loganville youth basketball leagues until his namesake arrived.

The two first became rivals, but then a friendship emerged and the duo looked forward to the day when they would wear the same uniform.

"We always liked playing together because nobody could beat us," Wes said.

Only it didn't turn out that way at Loganville High School. The Red Devils suffered through several mediocre seasons.

But their senior season is turning out to be more like they envisioned it would be when the two were unbeatable when on the same side.

Legendary coach Ron Bradley has brought his winning ways (and more than 1,000 career victories) to Loganville and has led the Red Devils to an 11-1 record.

Loganville has competed in two tournaments and has walked away with the championship trophy both times.

Talk in Loganville revolves around a region title and, yes, even a state title.

And Wes and Robbie Nash are two reasons why the talk is justified.

"They are among the best players in the state," Bradley said.

Robbie, a slashing, sharp-shooting 6-2 guard, is averaging 20 points per game and was recently named to the Atlanta Tipoff Club's All-State Team for December.

Wes, an explosive 6-1 forward, is averaging 16 points per game and prevents defenses from double-teaming Robbie.

The tandem's games, honed while playing against each other, now compliment the other.

"Robbie is so competitive and Wes is so team-oriented," Bradley said. "In a sense, that's good for both of them."

Robbie's passing ability allows him to feed Wes when he's double-teamed while Wes' explosiveness allows him to take advantage of an

open lane — sometimes for a crowd-pleasing dunk. "He can pass and I can go up and get it," Wes said. Both have solid perimeter games.

And the time spent together has given them a special rapport on the court. "I know what he's going to do," Robbie said.

"They're like coaches on the floor," said Bradley, who also knows the Nashes are the team leaders because, "they told me they are. And they accept that role well."

"We have some good young talent, but without their leadership, they wouldn't be as far along," Bradley said.

Both are as generous in attributing Loganville's success to its new coach.

"Coach Bradley has given us a lot of confidence," Robbie said. "He makes everything first class," Wes added.

As for future plans, both would like to play at the collegiate level, preferably together. Robbie hopes for a career in coaching and teaching while Wes contemplates pursuing a career as a chiropractor.

"They're like brothers. They'll argue but still stay best friends."

Loganville head coach
Ron Bradley

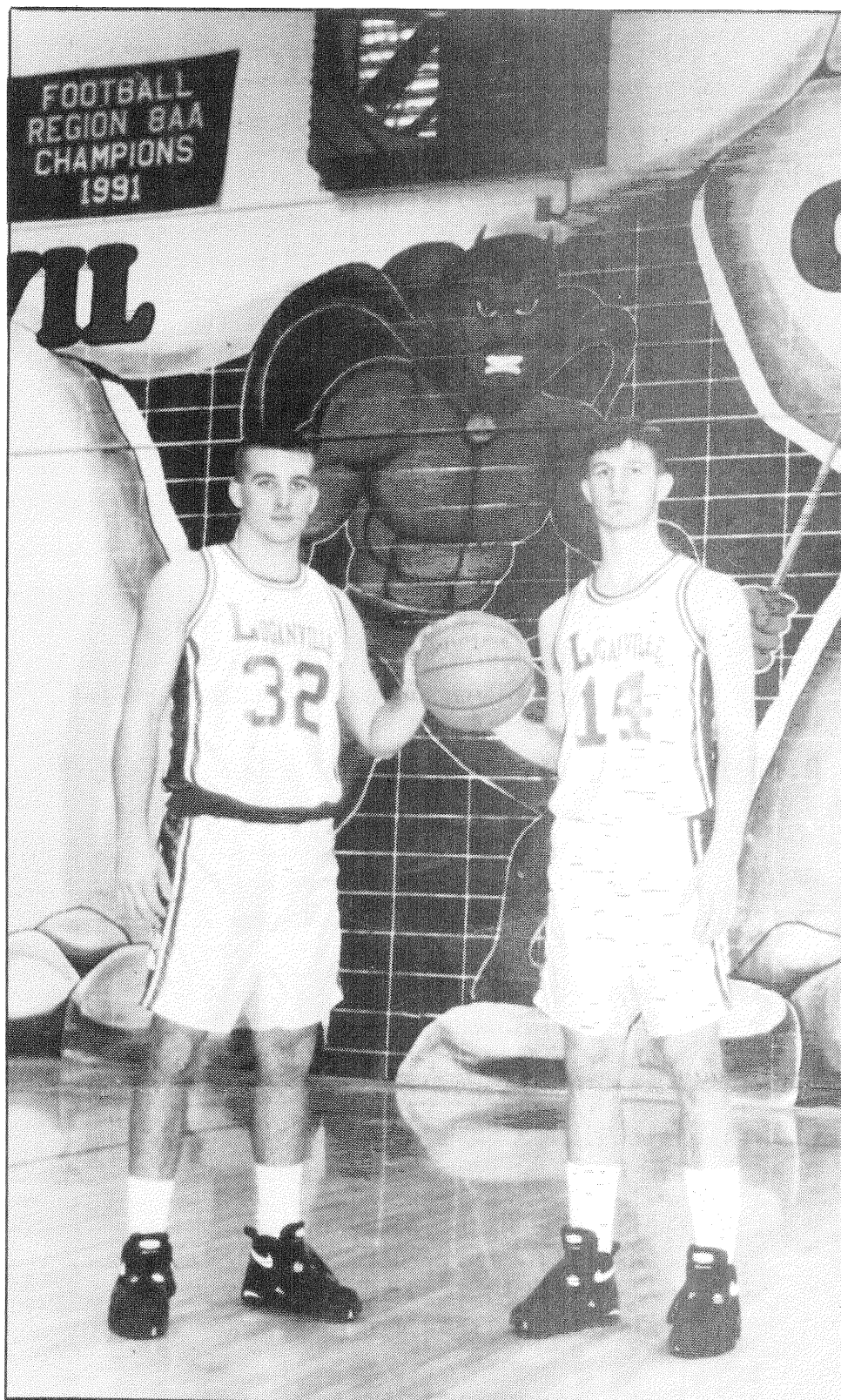


Photo by WES SWIETEK

Wes (left) and Robbie Nash, unrelated best friends, have helped lead the Loganville Red Devils to one of the best records in that state.

But wherever the future takes them, the two know the other will be there.

"They're like brothers," Bradley said. "They'll argue but still stay best friends."

The pair's competitive nature has led to fights about ping-pong or pool, they admit, but they have a common

goal on the basketball court.

"We want to show that we're a team that can play with anybody," Robbie said.

And thanks to some help from his teammates, particularly the one that shares a last name and much more, Robbie and the Red Devils are showing exactly that.