



STEVE DEAL / Staff

Loganville's Bill Bradley coaches sisters Laney (left) and Lucy Harris. Bradley's father coached the girls' dad in high school.

Coaching Harris sisters comes naturally for Loganville's Bradley

By Andy Johnston
STAFF WRITER

Bill Bradley calls it a unique situation, and that about sums it up.

Bradley coaches the girls basketball team at Loganville, and two of his players are Laney and Lucy Harris.

There's nothing so unusual about that, except that their dad, Tony Harris, used to play basketball for Bradley's dad, Ron, at Newton County.

"Last year, we were playing at Hart County and Laney ran a play that her dad ran for my dad 20 years ago," Bradley said. "Laney took the shot and scored and beat Hart County just like her dad had done, in the same gym. Both of these girls are experiencing a little bit of what their dad experienced."

It wouldn't have occurred if Tony Harris and his wife, Donna, hadn't moved the family from Covington to Loganville just as Laney was entering high school three years ago. Laney and Lucy were preparing to

attend Eastside High, which was making its transition from a junior high.

"I wasn't too excited about it at first, but after a month, I loved it," said Laney, a junior and the Lady Red Devils' top player. "It's the best thing in the world that could've happened to us. We were looking for a change in schools, for basketball and academics. It's a very special situation... me playing for the son of the man who coached our father."

"Very neat," Lucy said.

Bradley has found coaching the daughters of a man who played for his father isn't a particularly tough job. Early on, Tony Harris taught his daughters a love for the sport, and they grew up learning the fundamentals, the plays, the nuances that Ron Bradley had taught their dad.

"I'm just an extension," Bob Bradley said. "I'm not the same coach as my father, but I'm demanding and the expectations are the same. It was almost like it was meant for them to be on

the same path as their father. They are so much like their father. You can tell it came from all those hours in the back yard with him. This is not a hard job for me to do."

Both sisters are starters, but going into last weekend, Laney, a 6-foot forward, had played in only parts of four games this season after suffering a stress fracture in her right leg in the second game. She returned last week to score 25 points in limited action, including 11 in an upset of Gainesville.

"It's been very frustrating because I'm healing very slowly," Laney said. "It's been killing me not being able to play. I've been very frustrated, very depressed. Your junior year is supposed to be a big year and I haven't been able to do very much. It's killing me."

Only Lucy feels Laney's absence more than Bradley, whose team was 9-5 entering last weekend.

"It's weird. We've played together all of our lives, so it's tough her not being in there,"

said Lucy, a 5-10 sophomore post player. "I'm just not used to that. I'm starting to play better and get more comfortable, but we miss her. I miss her out there."

The bond of friendship between the Bradleys and Harris was born on the basketball court, but has expanded to include nearly all facets of their lives.

When the Harris sisters have time, they baby-sit for Bill Bradley's two children, partly because Bradley knows he can always count on them, and partly because it's convenient.

When the Harris moved to Loganville, they bought a house in the same subdivision as the Bradleys. Guess who else lives in that neighborhood — Bill Bradley's dad, who retired from the state but still coaches at Piedmont Academy in Monticello.

Coincidence?

"It's not coincidence," Bill Bradley said. "It's more like fate."