

Radio man

Patriots senior stationed at 910

BY FRED JETER

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

During the daily Sports Huddle call-in show on Sports Radio 910, veteran host Bob Black frequently refers to his technical producer, Mitchell Bradley.

It is unlikely Black's listeners have an accurate mental picture of this "Mr. Bradley" — that man behind the scenes who pushes all the right buttons on the afternoon broadcast.

No, the WRNL production man is not some college graduate with a degree in communications or a middle-aged man with flecks of gray in his whiskers . . . or even a full-fledged adult, for that matter.

The 910 producer, contrary to what you might visualize, is a 17-year-old senior at Patrick Henry High.

He's a 5-7 130-pounder who is having the time of his life, combining his dual passion for sports and electronics.

"It's great," Bradley said. "I'm getting to do something I really enjoy, and I'm getting paid for it."

He spends the morning hours at PH, taking typical classes. Then he travels from Ashland to the 910 studios atop Church Hill to work for WRNL as an intern with ever-expanding duties.

This is his second year in that capacity.

"I often have to remind myself he is just a kid," said Black, the WRNL sports director, a former Richmond Braves announcer and the longtime voice of University of

Richmond basketball and football.

"Mitchell is experienced beyond his years."

Bradley began getting excited about the radio broadcast business as a freshman when he saw the course, Communications of the Electronic Age, on the school's list of subjects.

That class is what led to his internship with the radio station.

"I knew I was interested in broadcasting, and that's how I got started," he said. "It's turned out to be four years of something I have really enjoyed."

Along with good friend and classmate Greg Abernathy, Bradley has produced an in-house program at Patrick Henry, called PH Football Replay, the past two falls.

The video presentation is aired each Monday during football season on the television monitors in the PH classrooms.

"Mitchell is an impressive young man," said PH Athletic Director Derek Carter. "He's a great story."

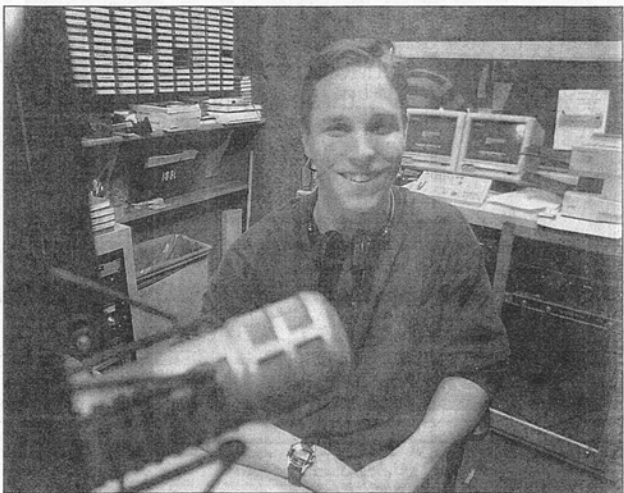
"Because I'm so busy in the mornings, I miss some of the PH replays, but I'm a big fan of 910 radio. I'm always hearing his name in the afternoons."

Bradley is becoming vital to Black's show, which runs from Monday-Friday from 3-6 p.m.

"I have as much confidence in Mitchell as anyone," Black said.

"He does so much for us. He does all the music you hear, the promos. He handles our calls. He's really the one in charge of putting us on the air."

This past fall, Bradley also cov-



Patrick Henry junior Mitchell Bradley has become a key member of the daily Sports Huddle call-in show on Sports Radio 910.

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ered Patriots' games for the 910 prep coverage. His postgame reports — with interviews — were of a quality you might expect from a college or pro sideline reporter.

Also, during football season, Bradley helped both WRNL with its postgame University of Richmond shows and WRVA with the University of Virginia wrap-up broadcasts.

Sports Radio 910 also calls on Bradley to help make its remote hookups fly in the late afternoons from other locations.

Bradley takes his duties seriously. The youngster has built his own mini-production studio at home,

where he spends time experimenting with different things to introduce on the afternoon-drive show.

"Mitchell comes to us with a lot of ideas," Black said. "A lot of what you hear on our show are his ideas."

Bradley played baseball in the Ashland Little League, but he has never gone out for a team at Patrick Henry High.

"I'm one of the shortest guys in my class," he says with a laugh.

Still, he enjoys competition and is unlikely to turn down an invitation for a weekend pickup football game.

"I spent all day yesterday playing football," he said recently.

Down the road, Bradley says he might like to do some play-by-play or color commentary or host a call-in show himself.

"But that's so far in the future, I don't know," he said. "Right now, I don't think I know enough to be a host."

Hearing that, Black piped in: "There's no doubt in my mind that he could, if he wanted."

Following graduation from PH this coming spring, Bradley will enroll in the Mass Communications Department at Virginia Common-

wealth University.

"I hope to continue to work for WRNL after I go to college," Bradley said. "I want to keep my job and not go off."

Bradley's acceptance to VCU came as good news to Black.

"I hope he gets all the hours [on radio] he wants," said Black, who teaches a class at VCU.

"In a way, Mitchell reminds me of myself when I was that age. But he's so far ahead of me, it's not even funny. He certainly has a career in this, should he want to continue."