

# Sportscast all stars Ashburn and Means signing off after 25 years

by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

Like peanut butter and jelly, some things—and people—just naturally go together.

Carroll Lee Ashburn and Demetrius Means seemed an unlikely pair when they teamed up for their first broadcast in 1995, but 25 years and 468 games later the two are devoted friends and have become synonymous with basketball sports coverage in the lower Northern Neck.

Ashburn was a born-and-raised Northern Neck, easy going and relaxed for the most part. Means was from up north, a fast talker from New York.

Means was ‘analyzing’ a Lancaster boys basketball game in the doorway of the gymnasium at LHS, where his wife was assistant principal, when WKWI/101.7 FM radio’s general manager Tom Davis overheard him. Davis asked Means to join Ashburn in the announcers’ booth and the relationship was born.

“I went back to the station and said, this is not going to work,” said Ashburn, who started his announcing career alongside Dean Loudy at WKWI way back in 1975.

But it did work, and as Means says, “It turned out to be a beautiful marriage. We just fit like a hand in a glove.”

Means was the basketball analyst while Ashburn called the play-by-play.



**Carroll Lee Ashburn and Demetrius Means announced in December their broadcasting partnership has come to an end. The two announced local high school sports together for 25 years.**

Last year, when COVID-19 kept Lancaster High School, and many other Northern Neck District schools, from playing girls or boys basketball, Ashburn started to reflect on his 45-year broadcasting career. The active 89-year-old decided maybe it was time to hang up his headset and microphone. Unbeknownst to him, Means was thinking the same thing but for different reasons.

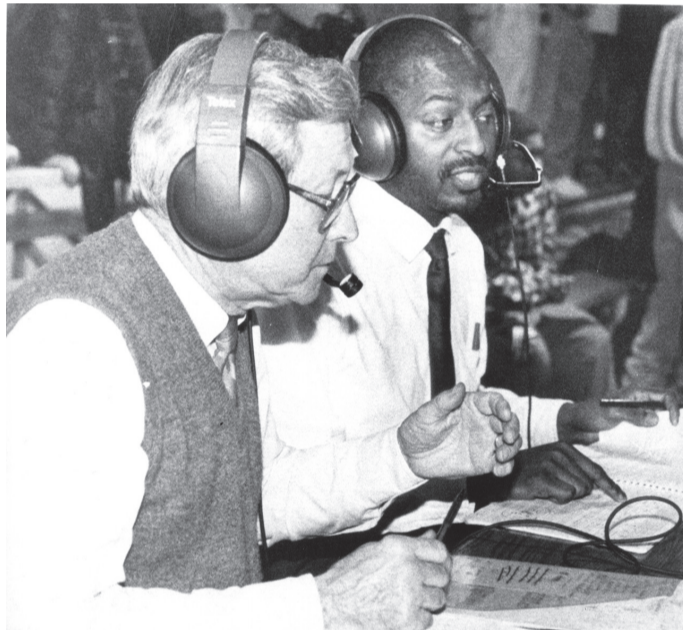
Just before the start of the 2021-22 season, the two announced they would no longer be regular sportscasters on Bay 101.7.

“About a month ago, Carroll Lee said I just don’t want to do this anymore,” said Means. “I had been thinking the last three years of moving on and had a lot of opportunities that I kept missing out on. And I felt like I’ve reached my peak here.”

“My first priority was to WKWI,” he added. “We were very loyal. People don’t realize what we did to prepare for games and all we did before getting on the air.”

Ashburn’s and Means’ 25-year

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**From left, Carroll Lee Ashburn and Demetrius Means broadcast their first basketball game together for WKWI in 1995. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi**

## Sportscast duo signs off

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career together has taken them from one side of the Commonwealth to the other, broadcasting playoff games from the Eastern Shore to Bristol. They’ve broadcast for both Lancaster and Northumberland games and for Nandua High School on an Eastern Shore radio station. They’ve broadcast five state championship games with three different schools. And the pair have twice been honored by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters for high school sports coverage.

Means says his research shows he and Ashburn were the second longest running broadcast team in the state. For their longevity and dedication to high school sports, they were featured on two Richmond-area television stations in December when they announced they were stepping down.

The two have broadcast through a riot that included a halted game and a 20-plus police officer response. After that game, they received an escort to the car.

They agree one of the more unusual games was a Northumberland boys game against Washington & Lee when coach Michael Stevenson decided to hold the ball through most of the first half.

“Talk about hard to broadcast,” said Ashburn.

“But afterwards, everybody said, hey, you guys made it exciting,” said Means.

The two also organized the Northern Neck Shriners boys and girls all-star benefit games for 16 years.

“You know, I never did think I did as good [a job calling the games] as I should have,” said Ashburn, who has been a part of 865 broadcasts in 45 years.

Means’ lifelong dream was to be a sportscaster. He spent childhood days mimicking the legendary Marv Albert. Means’ career started in New York “and I never thought in my wildest dreams that coming to Virginia would open up my dream, but it did.”

During his tenure at WKWI/Bay 101.7 he was part of several sports shows including the Coach’s Corner from 1996-99 and the Sports Fan Show from 2000-07. He’s broadcast for Christopher Newport University, Old Dominion University and local Fox stations.

He is the current commentator for the Virginia Commonwealth University’s women’s basketball team and hopes to continue broadcasting with the goal of a national talk show.

Although their broadcasting partnership has come to an end, their friendship will continue, said Means.

“I love him,” he said of Ashburn. “He’s more than a friend. We’re family.”



# Red Devils win Region 1A championship

by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

At the start of the season, new Lancaster High School head coach Dwayne Pinn said his goal was to “bring back the excitement” that used to surround Red Devils basketball. Mission accomplished.

It was standing-room only as more than 1,200 fans packed the stands at Lancaster High School Friday, February 25, to watch as the Red Devils made quick work of Washington & Lee to claim the Region 1A championship and a home berth in this week’s Class 1 state tournament.

Lancaster flew by the Eagles, 74-42, and will host Buffalo Gap tomorrow, March 4, at 6 p.m. in a state quarterfinal game.

“Friday night was a perfect example of what I envisioned,” said Pinn. “Seeing the community come together to support this team and seeing the student support was what I’d hoped for.”

Known for their outside shooting this season, the Devils did not disappoint and brought the crowd to its feet early after drilling three three-pointers in a row to go up 9-0 in the first minute. Troy Henderson opened with a long shot and Darius Smith hit back-to-back treys causing an early W&L time-out. Henderson came off the break to hit a short jumper and LHS opened its lead to 11 to set the stage for the blowout.

Lancaster led 30-11 after one period and held a 25-point lead at the half after getting 16 points from Henderson and another 10 from his brother Tyson Henderson in the first half. Smith contributed eight in the first half.

Tr. Henderson finished with the game-high 25 and didn’t score in the fourth quarter. He scored 83 points in the three-game tournament to make his total so far this season 490.

He led four double-digit scorers for LHS against the Eagles with Ty. Henderson scoring 18 and Smith 13. Jeremy Smith came off the bench to score 10 points.

Brandon Washington scored 15 points to lead the Eagles, who will travel to Altavista tomorrow night as the regional runner-up. Altavista is the Region B champion and Buffalo Gap the Region B runner-up.

“Buffalo Gap is very patient on offense so they’re gonna try to slow us down,” said Pinn. “This game will be about who controls the tempo.”

Lancaster plays a fast-paced offense and has an impressive outside game without a true tower in the center.

“Buffalo Gap does have a



**Coach Dwayne Pinn shows the Region 1A championship trophy as players, cheerleaders and the student section celebrate the Red Devils’ win over Washington & Lee.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



**Lancaster’s Tyson Henderson looks for the shot against Middlesex in the region semifinal game. He scored 18 against the Chargers.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

big guy,” said Pinn. “And that will alter our shots but it won’t change how we play and how we shoot.”

The winners of the Buffalo Gap versus Lancaster and Washington & Lee versus Altavista quarterfinal games will play on Monday, March 7, or Tuesday, March 8, in a state semifinal game. So it’s possible the Devils and Eagles could meet again.

The state championship will tip-off at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, March 12, at the VCU Siegel Center in Richmond.



**Antavion Thomas brings the ball down the court for Lancaster against Washington & Lee late in the regional championship.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

## Region semifinal Lancaster 84 Middlesex 61

Middlesex gave Lancaster all it could handle in the first half of Wednesday, February 23, Region 1A semifinal but the Chargers couldn’t keep pace with the running Red Devils in the second half. Lancaster went on a 22-9 third-quarter run to open up a five-point halftime lead and go on to beat Middlesex, 84-61.

The Chargers actually took their first lead, 26-25, just over a minute into the second quarter but D. Smith hit the first of his three three-pointers for the night to regain the lead for LHS.

The Devils reeled off two quick three-point shots early in the third to take a nine point lead as they started to pull away.

Lancaster’s Tr. Henderson carried the bulk of the load in the first half, scoring 25 of his 30 total and 25 of the Devils’ 42 in the first half. Henderson drilled five three pointers in the first half and did all of his scoring in three quarters.

Ty. Henderson spread out his 18 points and Smith finished with 17, including 12 in the second half when LHS outscored Middlesex, 42-24.

The Devils only took 10 free throws in the game, hitting seven. In a balanced effort, LHS had nine scorers.

Montrell Oakley finished with 19 points to lead Middlesex and Malachi Dandy scored 14.



**Lancaster’s Gerrion Owens breaks for a lay-in against Middlesex in the regional semifinal.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

“Friday night was a perfect example of what I envisioned. Seeing the community come together to support this team and seeing the student support was what I’d hoped for.”

—Dwayne Pinn, LHS head basketball coach



**Middlesex High’s Malachi Dandy is called for the foul on Lancaster shooter Jeremy Smith during the regional semifinal.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



# Red Devils break records at state indoor track meet, produce championship relay team, qualify Hailey Smith for nationals

by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

Assistant coach James Timm was still smiling last Friday, a day after Lancaster High's indoor track team returned from the Class 1/2 combined state meet in Lynchburg.

"I just can't stop smiling," he said. "I've never had runners improve this much at a state meet over previous season bests. I'm so so proud of them."

Lancaster ran six races and shattered six school records, produced a state championship relay team and had five runners-up in last week's Class 1/2 combined state meet at Liberty University. And as a bonus, senior Hailey Smith's time in the 1000-meter run qualified her for this weekend's national meet on Staten Island in New York.

"These kids have worked really hard this year, so it didn't surprise me that they had the success they had," said LHS coach Draper Washington. "Our goal during the season is to get our kids exposed to as much competition as possible so when we get to the state meet, they aren't overwhelmed."

Lancaster had four athletes competing in the girls meet to score 29 points for seventh place among 30 teams. Glenvar scored 61 to win the state championship. Appomattox was the runner-up with 60 points, Bruton was third with 53 and Tazewell fourth, 46.

The Red Devils had seven competing in the boys meet to score 26 and place seventh among 34 scoring teams. Bruton won the state championship with 65 points and Galileo was the runner-up with 50. Brunswick was third with 48 points and Glevar fourth, 36.

At the state level, Virginia High School League has a combined Class 1/2 meet. Four of the top six teams in the boys meet were Class 2 schools and five of the top six in the girls meet were Class 2.

## Girls meet

Lancaster's 4X800 meter relay team of seniors Smith, Chyra Boyd and Lizzy Woolard and freshman Ayla Saunders raced to the state championship in 10:41.53, crushing their season best time by 26 seconds and setting a new school record.

That same foursome also finished as the state runner-up in the 4X400 meter relay with a time of 4:24.91, 11 seconds better than their season best time and another school record.

"It was so nice having more experienced girls on the team to help me when I got nervous," said Saunders, who ran the first leg of the 800 relay. A middle distance runner, Saunders joined the indoor track team because she "wanted something to do during the winter and to get faster for softball."

"I didn't realize I would enjoy running this much," she said.

Saunders had a personal best time of 1:07 in her leg of the 400 relay.

Woolard also recorded her



Lancaster High School indoor track team members competing at the state meet from left are Jeremia Laws, Jameson Scott, Ayla Saunders, Berkeley Kellum, Lizzy Woolard, Chyra Boyd, Carter McGee, Ainsley Mumford, Trajan Waddy, Hailey Smith, Matthew Kane, Allison Foulkes, Michael Foulkes and Troy Cox Jr.



Lancaster's Chyra Boyd, in red, runs with the pack in the girls 1000 meter race.

personal best times in her legs of both the 400 and 800 relays. She ran a 2:41 in the 800 and a 1:06 in the 400.

"It was really exciting," she said of the championship race. "We worked so hard this year to pull this off."

Woolard also medaled in the 1000 meter run, finishing sixth in 3:28.41.

Finally getting a state title made all the hard work worth it for Boyd, who had a personal best of 2:44 in the third leg of the 800 relay.

She also ran the 1000 meter (9th place, 3:42.22) and a leg of the 400 meter relay team.

"The 1000 is not my race but I really pushed myself a lot at regionals to qualify," she said. "And the 4X4 really challenged me because I'm not a sprinter, but I had fun with the team."

Smith shattered her own school record in the 1000 meter for a runner-up finish. She ran the race in 3:01.81 to qualify for nationals in the 800 meter at that meet.

She also ran anchor on the two relay teams and had a personal best time in both.

Lancaster was in second place when she took the baton in the final leg of the 800 relay.

I realized how hard each person had worked all season and I really wanted that win for us," she said.

She ran the anchor of the 400 relay in 1:00 flat for a personal best.

"The team ahead of us took



Lancaster's Jeremia Laws hands off to Trajan Waddy in the 4X400 meter relay.

the lead early and when I got the baton we were in fourth place," she said. "My goal was to be in the top three."

"Everybody on that team had a personal best and that was awesome," said Smith.

In the 1000 meter run, Carly Wilkes of Glenvar won the race in 3:00.95.

"I knew going in she had the fastest time in the state," said Smith. "So it was still an accomplishment to stay with her the whole race."

## Boys meet

Lancaster's boys relay teams both finished as the state runners-up and Michael Foulkes turned in a season best time in the 1000 meter to finish second. All three were new school records.

The 4X800 team included seniors Carter McGee and Foulkes, junior Jameson Scott and freshman Matthew Kane.

"Going into the race we were just fighting for a sixth place spot and pushing hard hoping to get a medal," said McGee, who is in his first and final season of indoor track.

The team knocked 27 seconds off its best time. Kane shaved four seconds off his personal best time and McGee seven seconds.

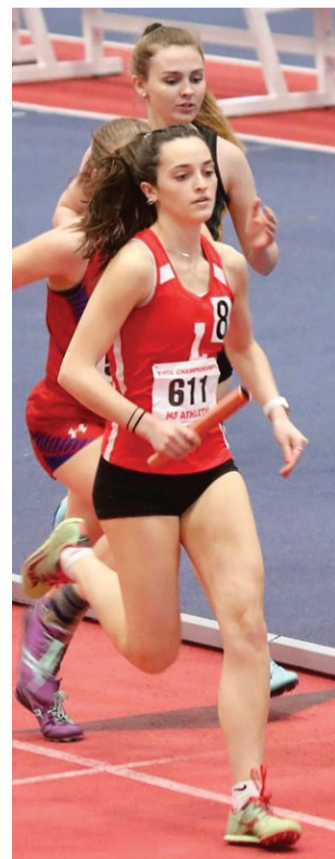
"When you go to states, everybody pushes a little harder but to have that kind of time was a surprise," he said.

McGee, who ran the second leg, said the team was in fifth place when he got the baton.

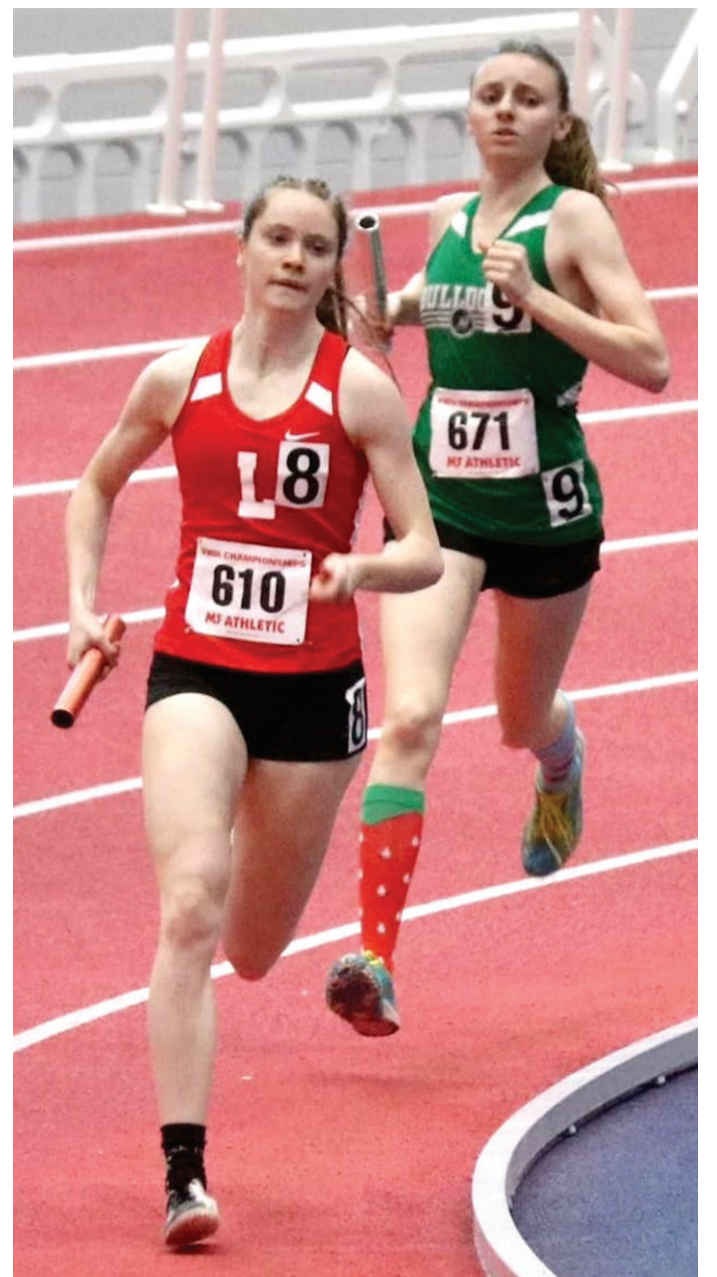
"I was feeling great, passing four guys. For a little bit,

I thought maybe we'd miscounted the laps," he said. "On the back side, I felt good and was still passing people and put us in second place."

Scott turned in his personal best time of 2:17 on the third leg and Lancaster was fighting in third place when Foulkes got the baton.



Lancaster's Lizzy Woolard, in red, makes a move in the second leg of the girls 4X800 meter relay at the state indoor track meet.



Lancaster's Hailey Smith sprints for the finish line in the 4X800 meter relay at last week's state track meet.

Photos by Latesha Scott and Robyn Saunders



From left, Lancaster's 4X800 meter girls relay team of Ayla Saunders, Lizzy Woolard, Chyra Boyd and Hailey Smith won the Class 1/2 combined state championship last week in Lynchburg. That same foursome also finished as the state runner-up in the 4X400 meter relay.

He shaved five seconds off his personal best time and had a photo finish for second place, edging out the runner from Auburn by a hundredth of a second.

"When I was crossing the finish line, I heard both of our feet kind of thump at the same time and then I just collapsed on the track cause I thought we'd finished third. Then my teammates came to get me and said we finished second," said Foulkes.

Lancaster's team ran the race in 8:44.08 and Auburn was third in 8:44.09. Galileo won the race in 8:18.12.

The boys 4X400 relay team of Foulkes, Kane, junior Jeremia Laws and sophomore Trajan Waddy also sprinted to a second place finish in 3:39.71. Galileo won the race 3:37.93. Lancaster beat out Bruton by nearly five seconds (3:44.23) and shaved 10 seconds off its season best time for another school record.

Foulkes also bested his time in the 1000 meter race, finished one second better than his fastest time. He ran the race in 2:43.77 for second place.

Foulkes was ranked first going into the race but had gone back and forth in the top spot this season with Bruton's Louis Wincheski.

"I was focused on the Bruton kid and he didn't have a good race and came in sixth," said Foulkes. "The kid from Galileo came out of nowhere and surprised us all."

Jamison Mantooth of Galileo won the race in 2:38.55. His fastest time of the season going into the state meet was a 2:59.

McGee placed eighth in the 1000 meter in 2:49.12.

Lancaster senior Troy Cox was eighth in the shot put with a 39'3" throw.

## Northumberland

From Northumberland, Layla Leo was the state runner-up in the 500 meter dash, breaking her own NHS school record with a time of 1:20.92.

Also medaling for the Indians was Camdin Sisk, who placed fifth in the 1000 meter run with a personal best time of 3:28.19 and Kyle Dobyms, who set a new school record of 37.8, placed fourth in the boys 300 meter dash.

The girls 4X400 meter relay team of Trinity Smith, Sadie Blake, Leo and Sisk also medaled with a fifth place finish and season best time of 4:28.41.

Grant Biddlecomb and Jay Bea just missed earning a state medal. Biddlecomb was seventh in the 500 meter dash in 1:12.52 with a personal best time and Bea threw the shot put 41'7" for seventh place, a personal best and new school record.

The Northumberland girls 4X800 relay team of Sophia Sapanara, Blake, T. Smith and Sisk also placed seventh with a season best time of 11:38.52.



Lancaster's Michael Foulkes was the runner-up in the 1000 meter.