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# Thank you Sirr, may we have another

## Parker has learned to balance academics, football and fatherhood while at A&M

By JAMIE BURCH  
Staff writer

What would you consider an insurmountable task? Try moving halfway across the country at 17-years-old to play college football. Compound that obstacle with having to raise an infant daughter while trying to balance an already challenging schedule of athletics and academics. For one individual, this seemingly overwhelming existence is reality.

Texas A&M junior running back Sirr Parker has had to overcome this scenario, all before the age of 20. After rushing for 312 yards as a true freshman,

Parker faced a seemingly bright future as a running back destined to flourish in an A&M system heavily dominated by the ground game. But before he could look towards better things to come, Parker's girlfriend informed him late that fall that she was pregnant.

Instead of taking the easy way out, Parker assumed responsibility for his actions. After the relationship between the two soured, Parker fought for custody and raised his daughter, Alashea, for the duration of his sophomore year.

"I don't look at it as something I should be rewarded for," Parker said modestly. "It's something most men do without thinking about it. Instead of looking for any accolades or medals for it, I just look at it as something I have to do."

Fortunately, Parker had a little help from his friends. Teammates D'Andre Hardeman, Toya Jones and Michael Jennings all resided in an apartment with Parker and his daughter last year.

Hardeman said Parker's situation made life interesting.

"It was kinda fun," Hardeman said with a smile. "Most of the time you won't have four college athletes with a baby in the house. It was a learning experience for all of us. It just shows what kind of man Sirr is, to take care of his daughter while he's in school."

Raising an infant daughter was just part of Parker's adverse sophomore season. While the Aggies continued their slide for a subpar 6-6 record, Parker saw his carries per game drop. After rushing for a team leading 704 yards through 10 games, Parker spent the final two games on the bench, with just two carries against the University of Oklahoma and none against the University of Texas.

Parker just shrugged and said the diminished load was a fact of life.

"It was hard to tackle," Parker said. "But I just had to go with the flow because I'm not a coach. I have to do what is asked of me. If sitting out is what's asked of me then that's what I have to do."

The California native made one last statement with an unlikely kick-off return against the Long-

horns. With the Aggies trailing 51-9 late in the second half, Parker took the ball three yards deep in the end zone and traveled the length of the field.

Parker said the lone Aggie highlight was a reminder to the coaching staff.

"I just took it upon myself to take it out of the end zone to get my self-confidence back," Parker said. "I wanted to show I did belong with the team and that I'm not a player that should be sat on the bench."

At season's end, the highlight of the Aggie rumor mill was that Parker was looking to transfer to the University of Southern California. Unhappy with the number of reps per game, Parker was torn between staying near his daughter or returning to Los Angeles to help raise his younger brother.

"I had a lot of personal problems back at home," Parker said. "The off-season problems and not getting the reps or playing at all led to frustration. ... It was a little of both worlds."

But the Aggies are thankful Parker decided to stay. Against Sam Houston State University, Parker scampered for 49 yards and three touchdowns.

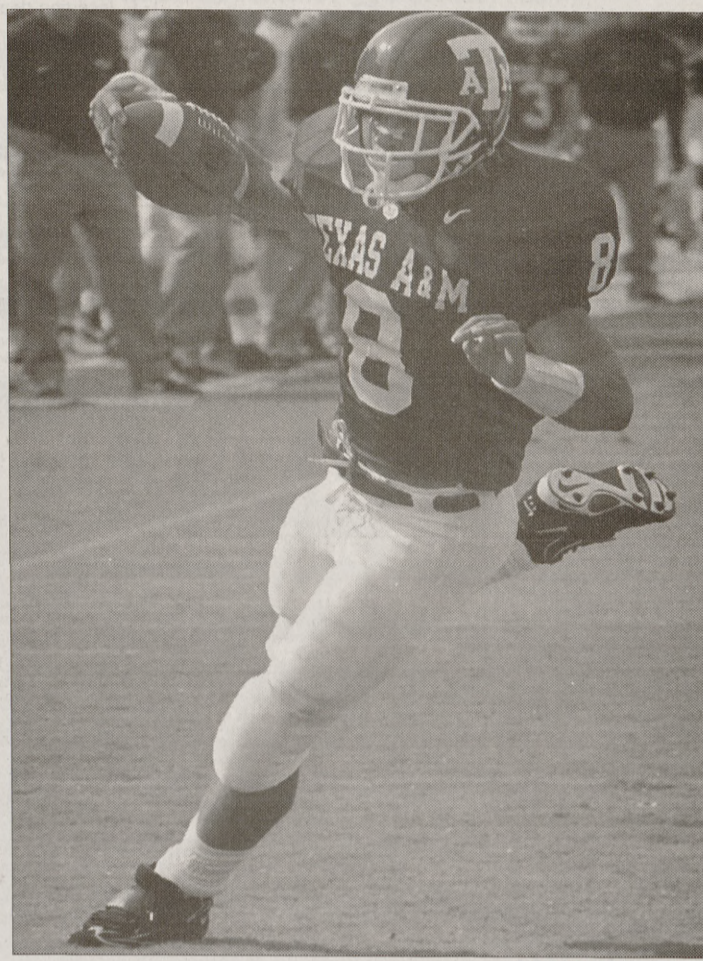
Running backs coach Ken Rucker said Parker found the strength within himself to face his difficulties head-on.

"Last year was a difficult year for both Sirr and the Aggies," Rucker said. "With any situation you just try to work problems out. With his carries diminishing and the season not going the way it was ... it was a soul searching."

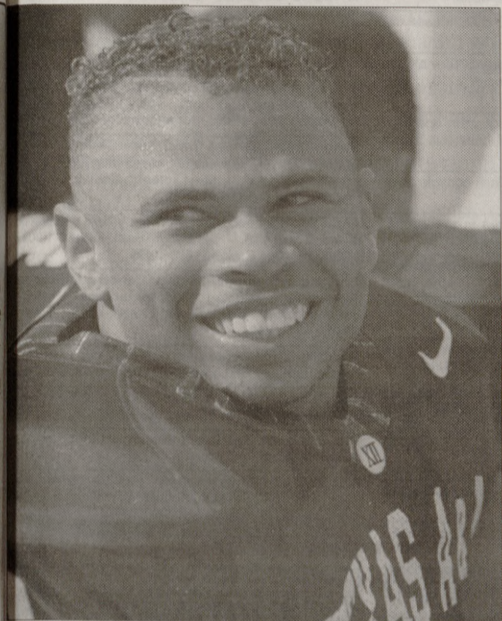
"The bottom line is he found out where he was supposed to be. God made a plan for him to be here and he's going to make the best out of God's plan. There's no utopia. So, what we all have to do is work through and solve our problems."

With the dismal year behind him, Parker is again searching for a promising future. And though he said it is easier to take things one day at a time, Parker said he sometimes likes to dream.

"I'm putting all my chips in my education," Parker said. "But if the opportunity (to play in the NFL) comes along ... I'll run for it."

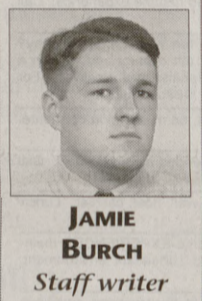
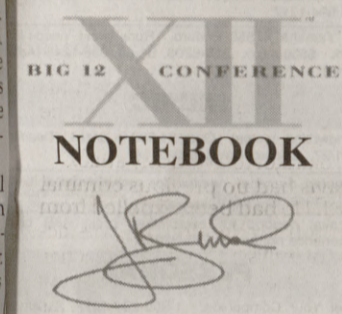


After leading the Aggies in rushing in 1996, junior running back Sirr Parker considered transferring to Southern Cal.



BRANDON BOLLUM/THE BATTALION

# Big 12 newcomers turn in spectacular performances



JAMIE BURCH  
Staff writer

As promised by the Swami, the Big 12 early season record has taken a drastic turn. Week three proved to be generous to the second year conference with nine wins and one loss. Take a gander at some of the spectacular performances provided by the lame duck non-conference schedule.

**OSU Freshman Sets Rushing Record**  
Cowboy tailback Jamal Fobbs rushed for 217 yards and one touchdown in OSU's 31-7 win over Southwestern Louisiana. Fobbs broke the freshman rushing record set by Thurman Thomas (206) against Kansas State in 1984. Fobbs 7-yard run in the opening seconds of the second quarter gave OSU a

10-0 lead.  
More impressive about Fobbs' feat is the fact the freshman broke the record at a school rich in running back lore — Thomas, Barry Sanders, and David Thompson.

**Bishop Crowns Northern Illinois**  
Michael Bishop, the JUCO transfer who led Blinn to two consecutive National Championships, ignited Kansas State's run for national prominence with an impressive 47-7 blowout of the Huskies. Having received the starting nod just four days earlier, Bishop finished the day 8-of-13 for 172 yards and four touchdowns. The new general also added a 43-yard touchdown run en route to his 270 total offensive yards.

**Sooners' Win Over Syracuse is "Special"**  
Ironically, the same special teams OU used to shoot itself in the foot in its season opener pulled out the upset win over the Orangemen. Linebacker Cory Ivy blocked a 44-yard field goal attempt with no time left on the clock to preserve the Sooners 36-34 victory. Ivy also sacked Syracuse quarterback Eric McNabb on a two-point conversion attempt with 5:08 left that would have tied the score 36-36.  
Sooner linebacker Travian Smith blocked two

punts in the game. Smith's second block was returned four yards by Sedric Jones for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter.  
OU rushed for 341 yards, including 239 by tailback De'Mond Parker. The Sooners attempted just six passes, completing three for 38 yards.

**Iowa State Vying For Conference Dweller**  
With Darren Davis on the sideline with a stress fracture, the Cyclones (0-2) suffered a 46 point defeat at the hands of the Wyoming Cowboys. After Iowa State jumped on the board with an early 42-yard field goal by kicker Jamie Cole, the Cowboys posted four consecutive touchdowns for a 25-point halftime lead.  
From the one horse, dog and pony show known as the Iowa State backfield, the Cyclones managed just 59 yards on the ground to Wyoming's 207. Fifty-nine would have been an average first-quarter total for two-time 2000-yards rusher Troy Davis.

**And The Winner Is.....**  
Oklahoma running back De'Mond Parker and outside linebacker Travian Smith along with Colorado strong safety Rashidi Barnes were named Big 12 Players of the Week for their efforts over the weekend. Barnes, the defensive player of the week,

had a 26-yard interception return for a touchdown tandemed with a fumble recovery and four tackles in Colorado's 31-14 win over archrival Colorado State.

**Games Of The Week**  
#7 Colorado (1-0) at #13 Michigan (0-0) — Michigan Stadium  
■ The Buffaloes return to Ann Arbor, Michigan, the site of the final-play pass from Kordell Stewart to Michael Westbrook to pull out a 27-26 triumph, Sept. 24, 1994. This game marks the start of the Wolverines 117th intercollegiate football season. Michigan holds the Division-I record for all-time victories with a total of 764.

UCLA (0-2) at #10 Texas (1-0) — Darrell K. Royal Memorial Stadium  
■ This marks the first meeting between the two schools since 1971. The Longhorns, who lead the all-time series 2-0, defeated the Bruins in both '70 and '71 during coach Darrell Royal's championship heyday. Texas second victory over UCLA paved the road to an undefeated 10-0 season and a Cotton Bowl berth.

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