

Parent-athletes struggle to do it all

Jacqueline Wittman
jrwittman@mail.txwes.edu

When Texas Wesleyan soccer player Danielle Parks and volleyball player Evoni Darling win a match, their night doesn't consist of going out to celebrate.

Parks rushes home to her 7-month-old daughter Kacelynn, and Darling can't wait to pick up 2-year-old Cheyenne. Being a student-athlete in college comes with enough responsibility, but for a few, being a parent-student-athlete is even more challenging and makes every moment even more valuable.

"I quickly had to learn how to manage my time better," Darling said. "It's all about fitting more in with less time."

Having the job of parent, student and athlete can add up. As involved parents, Park's and Darling's days involve class, diaper changing, homework and practice.

For Parks, a senior defender on the women's soccer team, college life suddenly changed from revolving around her to revolving around blue-eyed baby Kacelynn.

"Before Kacelynn, I would just get up and go to class or practice," she said. "Now I have to pack both our bags the night before. It's all about what's best for her."

If the baby is up at 4 a.m., so is the star player.

"Without a doubt, Kacelynn always wakes up at least twice a night, usually at 1 [a.m.] and 4 [a.m.]," Parks said. "It's definitely challenging, especially when I have a test or game the next day."

The women's soccer coach, Josh Gibbs, witnesses Danielle's perseverance and accomplishments as a mother, athlete and student. Gibbs has



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Parks and 7-month-old Kacelynn

coached Parks since 2006 and has seen her excel as a new mother.

"Danielle is a great asset to our team and motivation for

all of us to stay positive in life," he said. "She has a tough situation, but she's excellent at what she does, on and off the field."

"My life has definitely become more schedule-oriented and filled with more responsibility."

Evoni Darling
Student-Athlete and Parent

Many times, Parks will bring Kacelynn to soccer practice when she can't find a sitter or Grandma has to go to work.

"I have to plan at least one day in advance," she said. "Sometimes my only option is to bring Kacelynn to practice," she said. "If coach didn't let me bring her to practice some days, I don't know what I would do."

At practice, one of the trainers or injured players will play with Kacelynn until practice is over.

Parks' teammates enjoy seeing Kacelynn's precious smile and vibrant eyes; some even buy outfits for her.

"Next to buy are toddler soccer cleats, so she can be just like her mom," teammate Heather Pagano said.

Juggling parenthood along with athletics and college is not easy. Darling, a junior, understands.

Breaks don't come too often for Darling. She is enrolled in 15 hours this semester and practices from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., with matches running through December.

"I had to learn how to fit in all my homework and still have quality time to spend with Cheyenne," she said. "My life has definitely become more schedule-oriented and filled with more responsibility."

Grandma Darling cares for Cheyenne during the day while Evoni is in class and practice. Cheyenne is often present at Darling's matches. Her grandparents bring her out to support her hardworking mom.

Head Volleyball Coach Christy Clawson knows Darling's situation is a difficult one, as it is for any parent-athlete. But, Darling has

managed to maintain a 3.5 GPA and was voted co-captain by her peers.

"She has done a great job of balancing academics, athletics and being the best mom she can be," Clawson said.

With great support, Darling has made the best of her difficult situation.

"No matter how you look at it, a child is a blessing," Clawson said. "Evoni is blessed to have a beautiful child, teammates that are supportive of her and a family that has been her rock."

When Darling told her teammates that she was pregnant, they were sur-

prised and even thought she was joking, but now it's certainly reality.

"My teammates are very supportive and they love Cheyenne," Darling said. "She is like an extra person on our team."

Spending as much time as possible with their precious little ones are always top priority for Parks and Darling. After this semester, the little girls can expect to spend more time with their mothers.

Offseason brings the possibility of a little more free time. Parks will earn her degree in kinesiology this December, and Darling will return for her senior year next fall.



Courtesy of Evoni Darling

Darling with her 2-year-old daughter Cheyenne

Next week: a closer look at basketball



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The Weekly Sports Quote

"So your autobiography is out in paperback. What's it about?"

Jeremy Vine
Radio 5

Fantasy Football Pig Skin Pick'Em Leaderboard

Name	Pts.
Cara Lumpkin	83
Jeremy Newton	82
Michael Greer	81
Rachel Loftin	79
Phillip Blockinger	79
Fabiola Duron	79
Terry Waldrop	78
Jason Simpson	78
June Johnson	77
Oscar Lazarki	76
Daniel Bravo	75
Ryan Amador	75
Trey Bomar	75
Erik Hall	74
Keith Wright	74
Sandy Gonzalez	73
Kyle Morgan	73
Barbara Kirby	72
Randy Pistorious	72
Ken Flowers	70
Michael Chaney	56
Julie Handley	56
Justin Payne	30
Thomas Vasquez	30
Melanie Mudukuh	26
Carolyn Ikens	22
Michael Wylie	19
Ken Dunson	11
Andrew Grace	11

Wesleyan Week-in-Sports

- The Lady Rams Volleyball team (16-16, 10-6 RRAC) split a pair of games Nov. 7. The Lady Rams took a 3-0 (25-15, 25-17, 25-17) loss to ninth-ranked UT-Brownsville before defeating Our Lady of the Lake University 3-0 (25-15, 25-10, 25-10). Finishing fourth in conference, the Lady Rams will play the fifth-seeded Our Lady of the Lake University in the first round of the conference tournament. The game is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., Nov. 13 in the Sid W. Richardson Gymnasium.
- The Lady Rams Soccer team (14-6) defeated Bacone College 4-0 in the first round of the conference tournament Nov. 5. Despite a one-goal lead at half time, the Lady Rams did not manage to follow up with another win in the semi-finals. Tournament champions UT-Brownsville ended the Lady Rams' season with a 4-2 win Nov. 6.
- The Rams Soccer team's (11-8) season came to an abrupt end as the Rams suffered a close 2-1 loss against Our Lady of the Lake University in the first round of the conference tournament Nov. 5.
- The Rams Basketball team (0-2) dropped their season opener 77-72 to Evangel University Nov. 6 before suffering an 88-65 loss to LSU-Shreveport Nov. 7.

Upcoming Sports

	Game	Time/Place
Thursday	JV Basketball vs. North Lake College	3 p.m. Irving
Friday	Volleyball Conference Tournament Women's Basketball vs. Evangel University Men's Basketball vs. Southwestern Adventist Univ.	11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Sid W. Rich. 2 p.m. Claremore, OK 3 p.m. Waxahachie
Saturday	Volleyball Conference Tournament Final Men's Basketball vs. Sterling College Women's Basketball vs. Roger State Univ.	2 p.m. Sid W. Rich. 5:30 p.m. Sid W. Rich. 6 p.m. Claremore, OK
Sunday	JV Basketball vs. El Centro College	3 p.m. Sid W. Rich.
Monday	Women's Basketball vs. Dallas Christian C.	6 p.m. Dallas
Tuesday	JV Basketball vs. Cedar Valley College	7 p.m. Sid W. Rich.

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