

Explorers' Soccer Player R.J. Parker Signs With Central Methodist University

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - R.J. Parker, a standout soccer player for Marquette Catholic who was forced to sit out his junior season in 2019 after transferring from Trinity Catholic High School in Spanish Lake, Mo., signed a letter of intent to play for Central Methodist University in Fayette, Mo., for the 2021 fall season on Wednesday.

Parker will be playing for head coach Alex Nichols and the Eagles, who play in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, a small school version of the NCAA, and looks to make an immediate impact on the team.

Parker served as a team manager last season after having transferred from Trinity, a school which came about because of a merger between two north St. Louis County Catholic schools, Aquinas-Mercy and Rosary, to Marquette. An Illinois High School Association rule forced Parker to sit out his junior year, and an appeal to let him play for the Explorers was denied.

Parker chose CMU because its team is highly-ranked in the NAIA, along with having a great academic background, and it was close to home. Fayette is located just north of Columbia, in the central part of the state.

Parker, the son of Rennell Parker, Sr. and Chasity Parker, is a member of the school's Interact Club, and has been nominated for a racial harmony award at Marquette. He credited his teachers at the school for helping him get to where he is today.

"All the teachers here have been amazing in helping me get to this point," Parker said.

Parker is planning on majoring in marketing and management at Central Methodist. He plays club soccer for St. Louis Scott-Gallagher.