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Georgia Southern University works with local soccer team on player performance

December 18, 2019

Greg Ryan, Ph.D., Megan Byrd, Ph.D., Brandonn Harris, Ph.D., Drew DeJohn and Michelle Eisenman work with Tormenta FC to research player performance.

Georgia Southern graduate student Drew DeJohn has spent the last five months working with soccer players from the university’s men’s team and the Statesboro-based professional soccer organization South Georgia Tormenta Football Club (FC) to research and improve player performance.

DeJohn is a graduate assistant in the Department of Health Sciences and Kinesiology and has been working under the direction of Greg Ryan, Ph.D., and instructor Michelle Eisenman. They began working with Tormenta FC during the 2019 season to collect data on heart rate, GPS, sleep, recovery and training intensity measures, among others, before, during, and after training and games.

“With the numbers collected, we are able to provide the coaching staff with a good indication of how hard the guys are working each day,” DeJohn said. “We also strive to give the most reliable recommendations toward any signs of fatigue or increased risk of injury that players may be presenting.”

This research is important, DeJohn said, because it aids in overall team performance for Tormenta FC players on and off the field.

“Having the ability to track fatigue measurements and live game player performance gives the coaching staff important physiological insight to aid in player selection and practice planning,” he said.
The data collection and presentation hasn’t come without its challenges for DeJohn. In addition to time management skills, he is learning and putting into practice communication skills and more.

“Everything that is going into this project has been a whole new realm of understanding the sport of soccer and the demands it has on the body,” he said. “There is a dichotomy to almost everything that we collect and analyze, so, knowing the underlying physiological mechanisms has been the biggest challenge for me.”

The work he is doing as a first-year masters student is setting him up for his ultimate goal to work professionally with a soccer organization in Europe.

“I am often asked what I want to do when graduating from Georgia Southern,” DeJohn said. “The funny thing is, my answer is always what I am already doing now with Tormenta FC and the Georgia Southern men’s soccer team. This opportunity to work with top-notch technology and professional and division one athletes has been very rewarding.”

Ryan believes the skills DeJohn and his peers are learning in class and putting into practice through programs such as this make them stand out among their competitors.

“Few students get the opportunity to work with professional athletes, which positions students like Drew (DeJohn) very advantageously when applying for Ph.D. programs or for opportunities to work with professional athletic organizations,” Ryan said.

The Department of Health Sciences and Kinesiology is part of the Waters College of Health Professions. For more information, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/wchp.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 26,000 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.
New garden on Georgia Southern’s Armstrong Campus a tribute to medicinal plants

December 18, 2019

The Physic Garden, seen above, is located outside of Ashmore Hall and will feature plants used for medicinal purposes throughout history.

The area around Ashmore Hall on Georgia Southern University’s Armstrong Campus has a facelift thanks to a new physic garden full of plants that are historically and currently used for medicinal purposes.

The Physic Garden is unique compared to other collections in the Armstrong Campus’ 268-acre arboretum, which displays a wide variety of shrubs and other woody plants, because all of the plants are selected solely because of their relationship with humans.

“Physic gardens are obviously not a new idea, and our garden is modeled after the Sibbald Physic Garden in Edinburgh, Scotland, where the plants are organized by historical era,” said Philip Schretter, superintendent of grounds operations. “More specifically, our garden is defined by authors that lived during notable time periods related to herbalism. For example, the era of the early herbalist features plants included in the writings of Roman and Greek herbalists.”
The garden is also the first one in the arboretum to use QR codes that will link to a page on the arboretum website with information about each plant.

“This technology creates new opportunities for us to be able to provide more information than just a plant name to the campus community about specimens in the arboretum,” Schretter said.

Schretter noted that all of the plants represent the state of medical care throughout history.

“It was interesting to read which maladies were more prevalent in each time period based on what cures the plants provided,” he said. “The 16th and 17th centuries focuses on plants described by authors living during the rise of herbalism in Europe. The 18th and 19th centuries contains plants featured by writers describing the discoveries of new plant treatments from the Americas, and the 20th and 21st centuries features plants described in modern herbals and the use of plants in medicine today.”

The biggest beneficiaries of the garden will be the students.

“Students will benefit from the garden because the space is certainly more attractive than what was there before,” he said. “I think that since plants in the Physic Garden are almost all familiar, unlike other areas of the arboretum where the plants are more unusual, it might be easier for students to relate to how plants that were once used medicinally are now commonly available in the grocery store.”

For more information on the new garden go to [https://finops.georgiasouthern.edu/facilities/landscape-services/arboretum/](https://finops.georgiasouthern.edu/facilities/landscape-services/arboretum/).

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