

Gardner Named AAC's Top Freshman



-Staff Reports

On November 5, Freshman Shermion Gardner captured the titles of Appalachian Athletic Conference (AAC) Freshman of the Year, and First Team All-AAC, both in men's soccer.

Gardner, who plays midfield and forward, ranked among the league's top scorers this year with 14 goals. When coupled with his two assists, he led Montreat in total points with 30, also placing him among the top four in the AAC.

For his position on the First Team All-AAC, he will join ten other top players in the Conference to play next semester. Gardner says there is a possibility the First Team will go against the

professional team D.C. United in Washington, D.C. next February.

Gardner came to Montreat from Brazil, Trinidad where he was a member of the Trinidad and Tobago National All-Star Team and their National U20 Team. "I came to America last March . . . on a tour and we played Montreat," explains Gardner, "Coach Armstrong talked to my coach, and I think he's one of the main reasons I'm here."

Life in Montreat reminds Gardner of home, with the small-town atmosphere and laid back pace. "I've always wanted to go to a small college," he says. But it is not perfect here, Gardner admits, "Honestly, it's kinda

cold. I'm freezing!"

Besides the weather, he is enjoying his time here, and has confidence that the Montreat men's soccer team will continue doing well, especially under Armstrong's care. "I think we have yet to realize how big of a coach he is," he says.

"I'm delighted for Shermion," says Armstrong. "This gives Montreat a foundation upon which we can build."

Gardner declares, "We are not limited because we are a small school . . . People get used to just participating instead of competing, and I've been trying to really compete. We shouldn't just settle for being average."

Diverse College Campuses Yield Lower Binge Drinking Rates

-Courtesy of Collegiate Presswire

Drinking rates among higher-risk drinkers on American college campuses - those who are white, male and undergraduate - are significantly lower on college campuses with larger proportions of minority, female and older students. Researchers with the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) reported these findings in a study appearing in the November 2003 issue of the American Journal of Public Health. The study is the first to examine the role of college student demographics and diversity in moderating binge drinking among high-risk students.

Most significantly, however, the findings show that greater diversity on campuses may serve as a risk-protective factor, even for those who were binge drinkers in high school. The study found that incoming white freshmen who did not binge drink in high school were less likely to start binge drinking as college students, if their universities had higher proportions of African American, Latino, Asian or older students. And, incoming white freshmen who were binge drinking in high school were

less likely to continue drinking in this way when attending schools with higher percentages of minority or older students.

"This study has shown that having a diverse student body on college campuses is an important factor in lowering binge-drinking rates," said Henry Wechsler, Ph.D., principal investigator of the study and director of College Alcohol Studies at the Harvard School of Public Health. "In making decisions about admissions, colleges should recognize the many benefits of greater diversity on campus, including a possible decrease in problem drinking."

The study, "Watering Down the Drinks: The Moderating Effect of College Demographics on Alcohol Use of High-Risk Groups," was funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), based in Princeton, New Jersey. Meichun Kuo, Sc.D., also of the Harvard School of Public Health, is a co-author.

The study analyzed data from 52,312 college students at 114 predominantly white colleges from the 1993, 1997, 1999 and 2001 College Alcohol Study surveys. College student binge drinking, as defined by Wechsler and other public health research-

ers, is the consumption of five or more drinks in a row at least once in the past two weeks for men, and four or more drinks in a row for women. Research has shown that this style of binge drinking is associated with lower grades, vandalism, and physical and sexual violence. Students who do not binge drink experience many "secondhand effects" from the binge-drinking behavior of other students, including physical assault or unwanted sexual advances, vandalized property and interruptions of sleep or study.

Researchers examined whether an increased presence of students from groups in which alcohol is less heavily consumed had a moderating effect on those students who binge drink. Previous studies conducted by the College Alcohol Study have shown that binge-drinking rates vary greatly among certain student subgroups. For example, African American and Asian, female and older students have lower rates of binge drinking than do white, male and younger students. Moderating effects of minority and older students on the drinking habits of high-risk students were observed at schools with small, medium and

large enrolments. The moderating effect of having more female students was significant for the small and medium schools, but not for the large schools.

"The results may shed light on why fraternities, sororities and freshman dorms have particularly high binge-drinking rates and account for a disproportionate share of alcohol problems on campuses," Dr. Wechsler said. "These social and living arrangements tend to group higher-risk drinkers together, with little chance of their intermingling with those who drink less heavily."

"Although various interventions have been attempted to lower the level of binge drinking, to our knowledge, colleges have not yet examined housing and admissions policies, and student demographics to that end," according to the study.

The findings suggest practical solutions for predominantly white colleges, including: creating a campus environment that would attract a diverse student body; increasing the numbers of minorities on campus; encouraging more women and older students to live on campus, and in fraternity and sorority houses; and decreasing the heavy concentration on campus of likely

high-risk drinkers who are overwhelmingly young, male and white.

Further information on the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study can be found at: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas>.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse -- tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. To this end, the Foundation supports scientifically valid, peer-reviewed research on the prevention and treatment of illegal and underage substance use, and the effects of substance abuse on the public's health and well-being.

Source: Harvard School of Public Health
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