

Getting a Kick Out of Medical School

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For Tulane medical student and World Cup soccer fan Jabar Whittier, heading to South Africa this summer for an international medical rotation was a dream assignment. A rising senior medical student, Whittier is spending two months at the world-renowned Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa, and attending World Cup matches in his spare time.



Medical student Jabar Whittier attends a World Cup soccer match while on an international medical rotation in Johannesburg, South Africa. (Photo by Jonathan Henry)

Through an arrangement with the University of Witwatersrand health sciences school, he is studying trauma surgery and cardiology.

Whittier, who graduated from Tulane as a [neuroscience](#) major in 2007 and was a high school Urban Scholar, says he was elated to return to Africa. He and his family

lived in Harare, Zimbabwe, until he was 7 years old.

He has rooted for Bafana Bafana, the South African soccer team, and the other African teams including Ghana, the last-standing African team, as well as the USA and Brazil. But, as memorable as the World Cup is, Whittier will never forget his intense experiences at the hospital.

“One of my most memorable experiences happened on my first day just after lunchtime,” Whittier says. A 14-year-old boy was brought to the hospital by ambulance after falling off the roof of a train and striking an electrical line. The trauma team evaluated and stabilized the boy, who had a fractured skull, deep lacerations on his head, severe burns on his arms and legs and a broken fibula in his leg.

“Staring at the patient's exposed skull as I sutured his deep lacerations was somewhat unnerving, but I am grateful to have been given that opportunity to learn, practice and improve on my suturing skills on a particularly grave injury,” Whittier says.

After graduation from medical school, Whittier hopes to pursue a career in cardiology.

“I plan to continue traveling by working in hospitals and clinics throughout the world and hopefully at times it will coincide with exciting events as it did this time.”