

# A-State psychology student published in psychology magazine

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Senior Sara Brown was the only undergraduate student to author an article featured in the fall 2020 issue of *The Amplifier Magazine*, a national psychology magazine associated with the Society for Media Psychology and Technology.

It is extremely rare for undergraduate students to have articles featured, even as co-authors. The article titled, "The Black Lives Matter Movement and Children's Television," covers systematic racism in children and how children's television shows can affect their views on race.

Brown is a psychology major with a minor in creative media production. She is a part of multiple affiliations and clubs at A-State, including president of the psychology club. She said the idea for the article came to her through social media.

"I had noticed on social media that some of the children's media networks like Nickelodeon and Disney Channel had started posting some things trying to educate kids on systemic racism not long after what happened to

George Floyd," Brown said.

She had never thought about television being used as a tool to teach kids about a topic as complicated as racism.

Brown brought the idea to Dr. David Saarnio, professor of psychology at A-State. Saarnio said working with Brown was wonderful.

"She initiated," Saarnio said. "She was very willing to take constructive criticism and work on multiple drafts. She did everything she was supposed to do and made my life easy."

His goal was to help her while allowing her to write it on her own.

After conducting research, Brown's biggest challenge in writing the article was deciding on the direction she wanted to take it.

She mentions the Black Lives Matter movement in her article and said, "...the current support BLM receives through network programming is not enough."

Brown then describes the commercial aired on Nickelodeon in June 2020 with only a black screen and text reading, "I Can't Breathe" for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the same amount of time George Floyd was held down unable to breathe. Although



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARA BROWN  
Sarah Brown was published in *The Amplifier Magazine*.

parents were outraged by this commercial, Brown explained in her article that it was unlikely to have any long-term impact on the children who saw it.

"One message, one special event, or one episode of a program is not enough to have a lasting impact on viewers, especially on issues as layered

as systemic racism," Brown said.

According to Dr. Amy Pearce, professor of psychology at A-State, *The Amplifier Magazine* is only published twice a year and all featured articles have to meet the American Psychological Association's publication and ethical guidelines.

"When an undergraduate student succeeds in authoring or co-authoring a publication in a psychology journal or magazine, we recognize the skills, conscientiousness and dedication necessary in this wonderful accomplishment," Pearce said.

Not only was Brown the only undergraduate student to be featured in the Fall 2020 issue, but Saarnio said it was rare for an undergraduate to be featured at all, especially as a single author.

"I don't really know of students that have single-authored publications in the primary vehicle of a major organization," Saarnio said.

After completing the article, Brown said she was excited when she found out it had been featured.

"I was proud of myself because it was my work, but I was also really excited because it's something dealing with teaching systematic racism to children, and I thought it was really cool that people were interested in it," Brown said.

Saarnio said he was ecstatic to find the article had been featured. After submitting it to only the one publication, it was very unlikely for the article to be featured.

"Most articles are rejected. Not only was it not rejected, but it was Sara's product and I think it was a good reinforcer for her future," Saarnio said.

Pearce said listing published work on a resumé can help a student get into graduate school, which Brown plans to attend. She's applied to multiple programs for psychology and communication. Brown also hopes to have more articles published in the future as a graduate student. She said she's learned a lot about the publication process through her experience in writing this article. Brown would like to work in children's educational media in the future. She said she would like to do research to help developers create media effective in educating children.

If a student is interested in publishing an article to a psychology journal or magazine, Pearce recommended finding a mentor, someone experienced, supportive, and interested in the same ideas. She also recommended for students to practice their writing skills by working with the A-State Writing Center. Brown's article can be found at [www.div46amplifier.com](http://www.div46amplifier.com).

## PRO, CONTINUED FROM 1B

"You get Sarah to play in the spring and Sarah to play in the fall with a higher level of motivation than just being your last semester of soccer ever to being your last opportunity to get better to make a professional team," Dooley said. "I think that's going to bring Sarah to an even better level."

In her time at A-State, Dooley said Sodoma's shooting has become more deadly and more powerful as she has become more confident in her finishing. He also highlighted that her tactical understanding and her run making has gotten better and better.

That being said, one side of her game Sodoma does need to work on before heading to the next level, according to Dooley, is her aerial and heading ability.

"That's going to be something that she's going to have to become stronger with to play at the next level," Dooley said. "You have to be able to head the ball to goal. Otherwise it becomes a weakness."

Dooley has had some conversations with Racing Louisville himself and noted that over the coming year A-State could help in the process by sending the club film of Sodoma's performances along with many other things like biotesting through GPS and heart rate monitoring.

"Anything that they ask of us, we'll try to do," Dooley said. "I'd love for her an opportunity to make the roster."

Racing Louisville is set to compete in its first ever NWSL season in the spring of 2021 and the expansion team looks to build a culture of family around the team.



Photo by: Morgan Blankenship | Staff Photographer  
Sarah Sodoma dribbles down the left side of the field in a match against ULM. Sodoma has a shot to play in the pros in 2022.

Louisville also places a heavy focus on youth development and building from scratch.

"I really like the coaches and their philosophy that they're putting behind the team they're growing," Sodoma said. "They told me a lot about how they want their team to be run like a family and how they want to get to know their players on a personal level to be able to develop them. They think that personal lives transfer over to soccer, which I agree with."

Dooley drew parallels between the A-State program when Sodoma arrived in Jonesboro and how Racing Louisville is about to begin its life in the NWSL. Sodoma could really fit in at Louisville as the franchise grows.

"When Sarah decided to come here, we were a new staff with essentially a program that

didn't have a significant amount of history behind it," Dooley said. "You draw a parallel with her class coming in that maybe consider us kind of an expansion team. Her growth, along with the growth of our program started to really blend and started to really accentuate her abilities. Maybe this is something that could be a similar situation (at Louisville)."

The club also boasts a soccer specific stadium, Lynn Family Stadium, shared by Racing Louisville and Louisville City FC, a team in the USL Championship (the second division of men's soccer in the United States).

The club broke ground on a brand new training facility in August that will be shared by both Racing Louisville and Louisville City FC that is set to open this spring. The

facility will have a total of seven different pitches, stadium lighting and other amenities like locker rooms, gym areas, a dining hall and offices.

Sodoma is the first player from A-State to get a chance in the NWSL. She hopes that her opportunity will inspire players on her team and players across that country that don't go to the biggest schools to know they have a shot at the highest level of the professional game.

"In the back of your mind as a player now, you have to understand that if you do the right things, you perform, you'll get recognized and get an opportunity," Dooley said. "It really opens the door for everyone who might not have the chance to go to a Power Five school. Not that that's the only path you can take, but now if you do things the

right way you get noticed."

In her time as a Red Wolf, Sodoma's tactical understanding of the game has improved and she highlighted how her coaches at A-State have spent time with players individually to really help them with their development.

Dooley admits when he first recruited Sodoma he didn't know he had a pro quality player on his hands, but he said he's not surprised either.

When Sodoma first arrived in Jonesboro, Dooley said he didn't really know which Sodoma would show up, the one who sets up opportunities or the one who scores. In club soccer back in St. Louis, Sodoma showed she could do both.

Dooley and his coaching staff really started to see they had a next level player when the Red Wolves scrimmaged Pine Bluff Sodoma's freshman

year in the Student Activities Center. Sodoma scored two goals in a 6-0 victory.

"We're on the sideline looking at each other like 'OK,'" Dooley said. "She just did it in some explosive way. We knew she was a good player from practice and recruiting but we saw that in a game and we were like, 'OK this might be something.' Then she had a tremendous freshman year."

Flash forward to her senior year and Sodoma finished the 2020 fall season leading A-State all-time with 29 goals to her name and ranking second in assists all time with 15.

"She's one of those players, everytime she gets the ball," Dooley said, "something happens and she's fun to watch!"

Despite these outstanding numbers, Sodoma said she still needs to make sure to keep her confidence high as she gets ready for the jump to the pros.

"I think it'll help a lot if I keep my confidence up," Sodoma said. "You would think that I'm more of a confident player than I am but I think I need to work on my confidence more, like believing in myself. Especially at that level, I'm going to need to be more confident because I'm going to be going in against people that are most likely going to be better than me. I need to go in with a strong mentality thinking I can do it and not just be scared."

A-State and Louisville fans could see a Red Wolf icon suiting up in lavender in the highest division of women's soccer in 2022 as Sarah Sodoma looks to continue her storied, young career on the pitch.