

CARU® NEWS

Immediate Release

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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATES IN CARU REVIEW PROCESS

CARU Recommends MLBPA Strengthen Disclosure in Sweepstakes Advertising

New York, NY – August 11, 2006 – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), sponsors of the “Bring the Game Home” sweepstakes, provide more clear and comprehensive disclosures in broadcast, print and Internet advertising.

Advertising for the sweepstakes promotion came to the attention of CARU, the children’s advertising industry’s self-regulatory forum, through routine monitoring of advertising directed to children.

At issue in CARU’s review were two television commercials, and Website and print advertising.

The *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children’s Advertising* note in part that the “use of premiums, promotions and sweepstakes in advertising has the potential to enhance the appeal of a product to a child. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the advertising of these marketing techniques to guard against exploiting children’s immaturity.”

The *Guidelines* further note “all disclosures and disclaimers that are material to a child should be in language understandable by the child audience, legible and prominent.”

Although the advertiser contended that it believed all advertising was in compliance with CARU’s *Guidelines*, MLBPA made changes to the sweepstakes program by the addition of a text button to the homepage of the sweepstakes Website that more clearly identifies the availability of a free means of entry and revised television advertising to include “Free game entry at www.bbcards.com” within the video super disclosure.

MLBPA also indicated that any television commercial for this sweepstakes airing after June 28, 2006, would include CARU’s recommended methods of disclosure.

Those changes notwithstanding, CARU recommended disclosures in print advertising be made more clear and conspicuous. CARU further recommended that print advertising include information on the likelihood of winning, required by the Guidelines. CARU recommended also that the means of free entry in Website advertising be made more prominent.

“Television advertising should include clear audio disclosures of how to enter the contest without making a purchase and state a child’s chances of winning the sweepstakes. In print and online advertising, material disclosures should be made in type approximately equal in size and tone to statements such as, ‘Collecting cards could have you collecting prizes!’” the decision states.

In its advertiser’s statement, the MLBPA took issue with CARU’s decision and said it “believes that all disclosures and disclaimers material to children were legibly and prominently presented in the ‘Bring the Game Home’ sweepstakes program”

“Nevertheless, the MLBPA accepts the decision and does not choose to appeal it. In any future advertising campaigns directed to child audiences, the MLBPA will endeavor fully to comply with the interpretation of the guidelines set forth in the decision.”

For a copy of the decision or for press inquiries, please contact Linda Bean, Director of Communications, 212-705-0129.

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The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB’s National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry’s voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children’s advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB’s sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit www.narcpartners.org.