

CARU® NEWS

Immediate Release

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CARU REVIEWS ADVERTISING FOR STRIDE RITE SHOES *Company Acts to Modify Advertising for ‘Superball Shoes’*

New York, NY – May 8, 2006 – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that Stride Rite, a maker of children’s shoes, modify broadcast advertising for its “Superball Shoes” product to assure that children aren’t misled about product performance. The company has agreed to do so.

Advertising for Superball Shoes came to the attention of CARU, the children’s advertising industry’s self-regulatory forum, through CARU’s ongoing monitoring program. The advertising aired on Nickelodeon in December and February.

CARU review focused on two implied claims:

- *Superball Shoes* enable children to bounce and jump in the manner depicted in the advertisement.
- *Superball Shoes* enable children to bounce and jump higher than shoes without superballs inserted into the heel.

In response to CARU’s initial inquiry, Stride Rite revised the commercial and provided CARU with a copy of the advertisement before airing it a second time on Nickelodeon. The revised advertisement was similar to the original commercial except that the majority of acrobatic tricks were removed and only basic in-air jumps remained. The same background jingle promises “bouncy balls in every shoe...bouncin’ shoes.”

After reviewing the revised commercial, CARU notified the advertiser that the same concerns remained and invited the advertiser to submit consumer perception studies to help understand how children interpreted the advertisement as well as any outtakes that it had from the filming of the commercial. The advertiser notified CARU that it would undertake a consumer perception study.

During the process of generating the study, the advertiser informed CARU that, aside from a one-day promotional sponsorship of a “Spongebob Squarepants” special on Nickelodeon in April, it will not be running any advertisements for *Superball Shoe* on television until August 2007. According to the advertiser, the results of the study would be used to create a new commercial. The advertiser further noted that the new commercial would be submitted to CARU for evaluation prior to airing.

Given that another flight of television commercials for the product is scheduled to air again in August 2007, CARU will examine any revised form of the commercial for compliance at that time.

The company, in its advertiser's statement, said it "appreciates the clarification provided by CARU in this decision and will keep this information in mind for future advertisements"

The company noted that it intends to create a new spot for the August Nickelodeon flight and will work with CARU on the development of that spot. "Stride Rite respects CARU's concerns and remains strongly committed to responsible marketing of the company's products. All future advertising will be created based upon a better understanding of the Self-Regulatory Program for Children's Advertising. Stride Rite will strive to create advertising that embodies the principles and guidelines of the program. Stride Rite looks forward to continuing to work with CARU in this area and does not intend to appeal this decision," the company said.

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

CARU's inquiry was conducted under *NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising*. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU's decision, and the advertiser's response will be included in the next *NAD/CARU Case Report*.

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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) and the Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

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. ERSP's funding is derived from membership in the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit www.narcpartners.org.