

Case Report

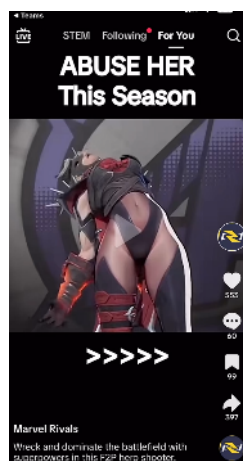
1. Case Number :	0060-25
2. Advertiser :	Marvel Rivals
3. Product :	Media
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Internet - Social - TikTok
5. Date of Decision:	5-Mar-2025
6. Decision:	Upheld – Not Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence
AANA Code of Ethics\2.4 Sex/sexuality/nudity

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This TikTok advertisement features an cartoon image of a woman laying back on something wearing a bodysuit, boots and gloves. The text "Abuse her this season" is also featured. The caption says "Marvel Rivals Wreck and dominate the battlefield with superpowers in this F2P hero shooter." The still image lasts for two seconds, before depicting game footage with a player saying "Guardian Sheild is one of the most busted abilities in the game. So abuse Invisible Woman while you can, but she also has some crazy synergies which is what Marvel Rivals is all about! You have the X-Men, Avengers, Guardians of the Galaxy and much more. All unlocks for free straight away! But the crazy part is they all have different combinations that will let you destroy not only the enemy but the literal map! And guys so much content being added with new superheros, maps and features every single season. So make sure to jump in while it's still early and download for completely free right now!"



THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Encourages sexual violence towards woman.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Advertiser did not provide a response.

THE DECISION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement depicts sexual violence.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a response.

Section 2.3: Advertising shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the first two seconds of the advertisement featured a still image of a cartoon woman with the text 'abuse her'. The Panel considered that the most likely interpretation was that the advertisement was inviting the viewer to harm the woman.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does depict or suggest violence.

Is the violence justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised?

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code which states:

"Although the depiction of violence in an advertisement may be relevant to the story being told in the advertisement, any violence must also be justifiable in

the context of the product being advertised, or else will be in breach of this section of the Code.

...sexual violence is not acceptable under any circumstances.”

The Panel noted that the man in the advertisement clarifies that he means players should abuse their free access to use the character in their gameplay while it is still available. However, the Panel considered that this was unclear for the first few seconds of the ad, and the man’s explanation does not counteract the initial impression of violence.

The Panel considered that the depiction of a cartoon woman in a pose which focussed on her groin and thigh region, along with the text “abuse her” created a strong impression of sexualised violence which was not appropriate in advertising this, or any, product.

Section 2.3 conclusion

The Panel concluded that the advertisement did breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Section 2.4: Advertising shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

For the reasons discussed under Section 2.3 above, the Panel considered that the advertisement contained a level of sexualised violence which was not appropriate and did not treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant TikTok audience.

Section 2.4 conclusion

The Panel found that the advertisement did breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement breached Section 2.3 and 2.4 of the Code the Panel upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE TO DECISION

The advertiser has not provided a response to the upheld decision.