

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Football Association Limited v. Anthony Gumbrell, FA Education
Case No. D2026-1479

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Football Association Limited, United Kingdom, represented by Stobbs IP Limited, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is Anthony Gumbrell, FA Education, United Kingdom.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <fa-education.com> (the “Disputed Domain Name”) is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 7, 2026. On April 8, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Disputed Domain Name. On April 8, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Disputed Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on April 9, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on April 14, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on April 17, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 7, 2026. The Respondent sent email communications to the Center on April 11, April 17, and May 18, 2026.

The Center appointed Nick J. Gardner as the sole panelist in this matter on May 20, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant, Football Association Limited, is the national governing body for association football in England and the oldest football association in the world, having been established in 1863. It is widely known as “The FA” and trades under and by reference to that abbreviation. The Complainant organises and regulates football at all levels in England, including the FA Cup, the England national teams, and a comprehensive education and coaching certification programme operated under the brand “England Football Learning”.

The Complainant holds numerous trade mark registrations for FA and related marks. For example, the Complainant holds United Kingdom Trade Mark Registration No. UK00912499761 for the word mark FA, registered in (amongst other classes) Class 41 (education; providing of training; entertainment; sporting and cultural activities), with a registration date of August 29, 2015. The Complainant’s Class 41 specification expressly encompasses the educational and coaching-related services for which the Respondent uses the Disputed Domain Name.

The Disputed Domain Name <fa-education.com> was registered on January 20, 2025. At the time of this decision, the Disputed Domain Name resolves to a website operated under the name “FA Education”, offering football coaching courses and education services. The website includes statements that courses are delivered by “FA qualified coaches”, a formulation that directly invokes the Complainant’s official coaching qualification framework.

The Respondent appears to operate FA Education as a business providing football-related education and coaching services in the United Kingdom. It appears that business is directed at providing such services to children with special educational needs. In informal email communications with the Center (see below), the Respondent acknowledged awareness of the potential conflict with the Complainant’s rights and indicated an intention to transition to an alternative trading name.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name. In particular the Complainant contends as follows.

First, in respect of the first element of the Policy, the Complainant submits that the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s FA trade mark. The Disputed Domain Name reproduces the FA mark in its entirety as its leading element. The addition of the descriptive term “education”, separated from “fa” by a hyphen, does not serve to distinguish the Disputed Domain Name from the Complainant’s mark; on the contrary, education falls squarely within the Complainant’s registered Class 41 activities and reinforces the association between the Disputed Domain Name and the Complainant. The generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.com” is to be disregarded for the purposes of the comparison.

Second, in respect of the second element, the Complainant submits that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Disputed Domain Name. The Respondent is not licensed or authorised by the Complainant to use the FA mark. Although the Respondent trades as “FA Education”, this trading name was adopted without the Complainant’s consent and cannot give rise to a legitimate interest in a domain name incorporating the Complainant’s registered mark. The reference on the Respondent’s website to “FA qualified coaches” demonstrates that the Respondent exploits the association with the Complainant’s mark

rather than establishing an independent identity. The Respondent's business directly competes with the Complainant's own educational offering, England Football Learning, which operates in the same field and serves the same audience.

Third, in respect of the third element, the Complainant submits that the Disputed Domain Name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Given the Complainant's extensive reputation and the prominence of the FA brand in English football, the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's rights at the time of registration. The website content, and in particular the reference to "FA qualified coaches", confirms that the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name with knowledge of the Complainant and with the intention of trading upon the association thereby created. Internet users accessing the Disputed Domain Name are likely to be confused as to source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement, in circumstances satisfying paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. The Respondent's use of the Disputed Domain Name also disrupts the Complainant's business by diverting customers who would otherwise seek the Complainant's own educational services.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not file a formal Response within the prescribed period. However, the Respondent sent informal email communications to the Center on April 11, April 17, and May 18, 2026, the admissibility and treatment of which are addressed under Preliminary Issues below. The Respondent's email of May 18, 2026, stated as follows:

"Good afternoon, I have replied. My business needs some time to transfer from the current URL to a new one. We have explained this several times, we look after educating special needs children and are a small business. I agree we need to change, we work with local authorities, and they all have varied ways of working. We have approvals which is several months work to achieve sometimes years! If we change immediately our company name we may lose they approvals. This is why it will take a little time. If we lose our approvals, we will be putting people out of work and young vulnerable children out of education, and they could lose the place they look forward to coming the most. This will be done but needs a little time. Is this possible? Thank you."

6. Discussion and Findings

Preliminary Issue: Respondent's Informal Communications

The Respondent did not file a formal Response in accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5. However, the Center received informal email communications from the Respondent within the Response period (or shortly thereafter). The Panel has considered whether to treat those communications as a Response or to admit them in some form.

Panels have discretion under the Rules, paragraph 14, to draw such inferences as they consider appropriate from a party's failure to comply with procedural requirements. However, where a respondent has communicated informally with the Center in a manner that discloses its position, panels frequently admit such communications as informal submissions in the interests of completeness and fairness, attributing to them such weight as the circumstances warrant.

The Panel admits the Respondent's informal communications as an informal submission.

Substantive Matters

To succeed, in accordance with paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant must satisfy the Panel that:

(i) the Disputed Domain Name is identical with or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;

(ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Disputed Domain Name;

(iii) the Disputed Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Complainant has rights in the FA trade mark. The Panel finds the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to this trade mark. Previous UDRP panels have consistently held that domain names are identical or confusingly similar to a trademark for purposes of the Policy “when the domain name includes the trademark, or a confusingly similar approximation, regardless of the other terms in the domain name” (*Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Richard MacLeod d/b/a For Sale*, WIPO Case No. [D2000-0662](#)). It is established that, where a mark is the distinctive part of a disputed domain name, the disputed domain name is considered to be confusingly similar to the registered mark (WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (“[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)”), section 1.7).

It is also established that the addition of a descriptive term (such as here “education”) to a disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the domain name and the mark ([WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8).

It is also well established that the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”), in this case “.com”, does not affect the Disputed Domain Name for the purpose of determining whether it is identical or confusingly similar. See, for example, *Rollerblade, Inc. v. Chris McCrady*, WIPO Case No. [D2000-0429](#).

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s trademark and hence the first condition of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy has been fulfilled.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

The Panel finds the FA trademark is, on the evidence before the Panel, a term in which the Complainant has developed a significant reputation.

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances any of which is sufficient to demonstrate that a respondent has rights or legitimate interests in a domain name:

(i) before any notice to the respondent of the dispute, use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the domain name or a name corresponding to the domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services; or

(ii) the respondent has been commonly known by the domain name, even if the respondent has acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or

(iii) the respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the domain name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

The threshold burden on the Complainant under this element is to make out a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests. Once that prima facie case is established, the burden of production shifts to the Respondent to come forward with evidence of rights or legitimate interests: see [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

The Complainant has established a prima facie case. The Respondent is not licensed or authorised by the Complainant to register or use any domain name incorporating the FA trademark. There is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the Disputed Domain Name independently of the Complainant’s mark. The Respondent has not been permitted to use the FA mark and the trading name “FA Education” was adopted without the Complainant’s consent.

The Panel turns to consider whether the Respondent's informal communications disclose any basis for a finding of rights or legitimate interests. The Respondent invokes the fact that it operates a genuine business offering football coaching and education services. The Panel acknowledges that the Respondent appears to carry on a legitimate commercial activity in its own right. The panel is sympathetic to the fact that this appears to be a worthwhile and legitimate business offering useful services to children with special educational needs. However, the legitimacy of an underlying business does not of itself confer a right or legitimate interest in a domain name that incorporates a third party's registered trade mark: the question is not whether the business is genuine, but whether the use of the particular domain name is bona fide.

Three circumstances weigh decisively against the Respondent in this regard. First, the Disputed domain Name adopts the Complainant's trademark in a way that is obviously confusing and misleading. The Respondent must have realized this was likely to be the case as the Respondent's services directly compete with the Complainant's own educational offering, England Football Learning. A respondent who uses a domain name corresponding to the complainant's trademark to offer services competing with the complainant in the complainant's own trade mark field cannot plausibly assert that such use constitutes a bona fide offering of goods or services within the meaning of paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy.

Second, the Respondent's website expressly references "FA qualified coaches". That formulation directly invokes the Complainant's official coaching qualification framework. Rather than creating a distinct identity, the Respondent thereby trades on the association with the Complainant's brand. Such conduct is inconsistent with a bona fide use of the Disputed Domain Name.

Third, the Respondent's own informal communications acknowledge the conflict with the Complainant's rights and indicate a willingness to transition to a new trading name. That acknowledgment confirms the lack of legitimate interest: a party who concedes the need to rebrand in response to a trade mark complaint is not in a position to assert that its prior use of the domain name was legitimate.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy requires the Complainant to demonstrate that the Disputed Domain Name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Both registration in bad faith and use in bad faith must be established, although the two may be inferred from the same body of evidence

Under paragraph 4(b) of the Policy a non-exhaustive list of factors evidencing registration and use in bad faith comprises:

(i) circumstances indicating that you have registered or you have acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of your documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or

(ii) you have registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that you have engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or

(iii) you have registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or

(iv) by using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your web site or other on-line location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your web site or location or of a product or service on your web site or location.

The FA mark has an exceptionally strong reputation in the United Kingdom as the identifier of the national governing body for association football, established in 1863. The FA's educational and coaching programmes are well-known in the football community. The Panel considers it inconceivable that the Respondent, operating a football coaching and education business in the United Kingdom, was unaware of the Complainant at the time of registration of the Disputed Domain Name. That conclusion is confirmed by the Respondent's own website content: the reference to "FA qualified coaches" is explicable only on the basis that the Respondent knew of the Complainant and its qualification framework and chose deliberately to invoke that association.

Registration of a domain name that incorporates a well-known trade mark, by a party that is aware of the trade mark and intends to operate in the same field, constitutes registration in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.1. The Panel is satisfied that the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name with knowledge of the Complainant's FA mark and with the intention of operating in an educational field covered by that mark.

Use in bad faith is established on two grounds. First, the Respondent's use of the Disputed Domain Name is likely to create confusion among Internet users as to whether the Respondent's services are affiliated with, endorsed by, or sponsored by the Complainant. This constitutes use for commercial gain by misleadingly diverting consumers or tarnishing the Complainant's trade mark, within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Second, the Respondent's use of the Disputed Domain Name to offer competing football education services disrupts the Complainant's business by diverting to the Respondent customers who might otherwise have sought the Complainant's own England Football Learning programmes, within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iii) of the Policy.

The Panel notes that the Respondent's informal email communications contain a concession that the conflict with the Complainant's rights should be resolved. Whilst the Panel is not unsympathetic to the operational inconvenience that any transition may cause, the UDRP is not the appropriate mechanism for the negotiation of commercial accommodation or transitional arrangements. The Panel's finding that the third element is established is not intended to be a comment upon the merits of the Respondent's educational activities, but reflects the conclusion that the Disputed Domain Name was registered and is being used in a manner that takes advantage of the Complainant's trade mark rights in a field directly overlapping with the Complainant's own registered activities.

The third element of the Policy is established.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the Disputed Domain Name <fa-education.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Nick J. Gardner/

Nick J. Gardner

Sole Panelist

Date: June 1, 2026