

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Ares Management LLC v. tom ford

Case No. D2025-1283

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Ares Management LLC, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Greenberg Traurig, LLP, United States.

The Respondent is tom ford, United States.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <aresmgmt-vip.com> is registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on March 28, 2025. On March 31, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On April 1, 2025, 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 (Redacted for Privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on April 2, 2025, 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 4, 2025.

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 8, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 28, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on April 29, 2025.

The Center appointed Evan D. Brown as the sole panelist in this matter on May 9, 2025. 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 is in the business of providing alternative asset management services. It owns the trademark ARES and similar variations of that mark. It enjoys the benefits of registration of several marks, including the mark ARES MANAGEMENT (United States Reg. No. 3,925,366, registered on March 1, 2011).

According to the Whois records, the disputed domain name was registered on January 9, 2025. The Respondent has used the disputed domain name to impersonate the Complainant's business. Notably, the website posted at the disputed domain name prominently displays the Complainant's design mark and includes what the Complainant identifies as a fake login page that allows users to set up an account and purportedly request loans. The Complainant asserts this is an attempt to deceive unsuspecting victims into believing they are interacting with the Complainant and to collect personal and financial information under false pretenses.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark; that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not respond to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

To succeed, the Complainant must demonstrate that all of the elements listed in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy have been satisfied: (i) the disputed domain name is identical 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, and (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. The Panel finds that all three of these elements have been met in this case.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

This first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name.

A registered trademark provides a clear indication that the rights in the mark shown on the trademark certificate belong to its respective owner. See *Advance Magazine Publishers Inc., Les Publications Conde Nast S.A. v. Voguechen*, WIPO Case No. [D2014-0657](#). The Complainant has demonstrated its rights in its ARES and ARES MANAGEMENT marks by providing evidence of its trademark registration. See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The disputed domain name is an apparent misspelling of the Complainant's ARES MANAGEMENT mark. It incorporates a compressed and typo-squatted version of the mark with the addition of the hyphenated term "-vip". This does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the Complainant's ARES MANAGEMENT mark. See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

It is standard practice when comparing a disputed domain name to a complainant's trademarks, to not take the extension into account. See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#) at 1.11.1. The Panel finds that the Complainant has established this first element under the Policy.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

The Panel evaluates this element of the Policy by first looking to see whether the Complainant has made a prima facie showing that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. If the Complainant makes that showing, the burden of production of demonstrating rights or legitimate interests shifts to the Respondent (with the burden of proof always remaining with the Complainant). See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1; *AXA SA v. Huade Wang*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-1289](#).

On this point, the Complainant asserts, among other things, that: (1) the Respondent has not been authorized, licensed, or otherwise permitted by the Complainant to register and/or use the disputed domain name; (2) the Respondent is not making a protected non-commercial or fair use of the disputed domain name; and (3) the Respondent has not used or prepared to use the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Instead, the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to set up a fake login page that allows users to set up an account and request loans as part of an effort to mislead victims into providing personal and financial information under the mistaken belief they are dealing with the Complainant.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has made the required prima facie showing. The Respondent has not presented evidence to overcome this prima facie showing. And nothing in the record otherwise tilts the balance in the Respondent's favor. The use of a domain name for illegal activity such as impersonation or passing off, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. *Société des Produits Nestlé S.A. v. Great Homes, jobs-nestle.com*, WIPO Case No. [D2024-2911](#); [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established this second element under the Policy.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Policy requires a complainant to establish that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

In this case, the evidence of bad faith is compelling. The Respondent registered and used the disputed domain name, which is confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark, to host a website that prominently displays the Complainant's design mark and appears to include a fake login interface purporting to offer financial services associated with the Complainant. This conduct is clearly designed to deceive and exploit the trust of unsuspecting users, thereby constituting a textbook example of bad faith use.

Furthermore, the Respondent has provided an obviously bogus physical address and contact number (e.g., "US South Australia Ohio 2701 Stiles Street MARTINS FERRY"; phone: 1234567), which indicates an intent to conceal its identity and evade legal accountability.

Under these circumstances, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant has established the third element under the Policy.

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 <aresmgment-vip.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Evan D. Brown/

Evan D. Brown

Sole Panelist

Date: May 22, 2025