

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Newcastle United Football Company Limited v. Luke Grice
Case No. D2025-3193

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Newcastle United Football Company Limited, United Kingdom (“UK”), represented by Gateley Legal, UK.

The Respondent is Luke Grice, UK.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <newcastleuntied.com> (the “Domain Name”) is registered with IONOS SE (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on August 11, 2025. On August 11, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On August 11, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on August 15, 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 August 15, 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 August 18, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was September 7, 2025. The Respondent sent email communications to the Center on August 18, 2025 and August 25, 2025.

The Center appointed Ian Lowe as the sole panelist in this matter on September 16, 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 Newcastle United Football Company Limited, a football club established in 1892 and competing in the Premier League in England. The Complainant operates under the trading name “Newcastle United” and is based at St. James’ Park in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

The Complainant is the proprietor of numerous registered trademarks for NEWCASTLE UNITED, including UK trademark number 3886183 registered on June 9, 2023, covering a broad range of classes typical of a professional football club; European Union trademark number 8285637 registered on December 1, 2009; and United States of America trademark number 7160806 registered on September 12, 2023.

The Complainant operates its official website at <newcastleunited.com>.

The Domain Name was registered on April 29, 2025. It currently resolves to the website of the Sunderland football club, which is based like Newcastle United in the north of England, UK, is a competing team in the English Premier League and local rival of the Complainant.

The Respondent is Lee Bishop, with a contact address in the UK, where the Complainant is located.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to its NEWCASTLE UNITED trademark (the “Mark”), that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name, and that the Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent sent informal email communications to the Center but did not submit a formal Response to the Complaint. The Respondent offered to transfer the Domain Name to the Complainant.

6. Discussion and Findings

For this Complaint to succeed in relation to the Domain Name the Complainant must prove that:

- (i) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name; and
- (iii) the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. 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. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ([“WIPO Overview 3.0”](#)), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark for the purposes of the Policy through its registered trademarks for NEWCASTLE UNITED in multiple jurisdictions. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

Ignoring the generic Top-Level Domain “.com”, the Domain Name comprises the entirety of the Mark, save for the reversal of the two letters “it” to “ti”. The Panel notes that the substitution of “ti” for “it” creates visual similarity that is designed to confuse Internet users. As panels have consistently recognized, “a domain name which consists of a common, obvious, or intentional misspelling of a trademark is considered by panels to be confusingly similar to the relevant mark for purposes of the first element”. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.9.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to a trademark in which the Complainant has rights, and the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. Accordingly, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

The Complainant has made out a strong prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. The Respondent is not authorized by the Complainant to use its trademark, is not commonly known by “Newcastle United” or any variation, and there is no evidence of any trademark rights in related terms.

In the Panel's view, the Domain Name is a typical example of typosquatting, whereby the Domain Name was registered with a minor variation of the Complainant's Mark, with a view to taking advantage of typographical errors by Internet users. Such a registration cannot possibly give rise to rights or legitimate interests on the part of the Respondent in this case.

Furthermore, the Domain Name resolves to the website of a competitor of the Complainant, and the use of the Domain Name for this purpose indicates only an intention to disrupt the business of the Complainant rather than any legitimate independent use.

The Respondent chose not to submit a formal Response despite informal communications with the Center, providing no evidence of rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name, but offering to transfer the Domain Name to the Complainant.

In the circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In light of the typosquatting nature of the Domain Name, comprising as it does a deliberate misspelling of the Complainant's Mark and domain name, the Panel is in no doubt that the Respondent had the Complainant and its rights in the Mark in mind when it registered the Domain Name.

The Panel considers that typosquatting amounts to paradigm bad faith registration and use for the purposes of the Policy. The Panel cannot conceive of any legitimate use to which the Respondent could put the Domain Name, given its obvious derivation from the Complainant's Mark and domain name. Since the Domain Name resolves to the website of a competitor of the Complainant, the only plausible purpose for registering such a domain name is to take unfair advantage of the Complainant's rights to disrupt the Complainant's business.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith, and the third element of the Policy has been 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 Domain Name <newcastleuntied.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Ian Lowe/

Ian Lowe

Sole Panelist

Date: September 30, 2025