

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Riot Games, Inc. v. Asijit Paul

Case No. D2025-3705

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Riot Games, Inc., United States of America, represented by Marq Vision Inc., United States of America.

The Respondent is Asijit Paul, India.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <thevalohub.com> 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 September 12, 2025. On September 12, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On September 15, 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 (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on September 16, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint.

The Complainant requested the suspension of the proceeding on September 24, 2025, after some informal communications from the Respondent on September 16, 2025. The Proceeding was suspended until October 26, 2025.

On October 23 and October 27, 2025, the Complainant requested the reinstitution of the proceeding.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 October 29, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 18, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any formal response, but, on October 31, 2025, sent an informal email communication to the Center in which it indicated its willingness to settle the dispute. Accordingly, the Center notified the commencement of panel appointment process on November 19, 2025.

The Center appointed Luca Barbero as the sole panelist in this matter on November 25, 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 an American online video game producer, developer and distributor of online games and related merchandise. It is the developer and publisher, amongst others, of a free-to-play multiplayer tactical first-person shooter game under the trademark VALORANT.

The Complainant is the owner of several trademark registrations for VALORANT, including the following, as per trademark registration details submitted as annexes 5 through 8 to the Complaint:

- United States trademark registration No. 6286130 for V VALORANT (figurative mark), filed on March 2, 2020, and registered on March 9, 2021, in international class 25;
- United States trademark registration No. 6815692 for VALORANT (word mark), filed on February 20, 2020, and registered on August 9, 2022, in international class 28;
- Serbia trademark registration No. 082408 for VALORANT (figurative mark), filed on March 2, 2020, and registered on April 29, 2022, in classes 9, 16, 18, 20, 25, 28, 38 and 41;
- Mexico trademark registration No. 2142986 for VALORANT (figurative mark), filed on March 4, 2020 and registered on September 21, 2020, in class 25.

The Complainant also owns the domain name <playvalorant.com>, registered on December 5, 2019. The VALORANT game, products and services under the trademark VALORANT are promoted online via the Complainant's websites "www.riotgames.com" and "www.playvalorant.com".

The disputed domain name <thevalohub.com> was registered on August 28, 2024, and does not currently point to an active website. However, prior to the present proceeding, it resolved to a website displaying copyrighted materials from the Complainant's VALORANT game, such as arsenal skins, and providing links to purchase VALORANT accounts, as well as offering users daily updates on the latest items available in the VALORANT store.

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.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the trademark VALORANT in which the Complainant has rights as it reproduces the distinctive element of the Complainant's trademark, "valo", with the mere addition of the definite article "the" and the dictionary term "hub" followed by the generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com".

The Complainant further submits that the use of the word "hub" only serves to further increase the likelihood of confusion since it is commonly understood to mean a central place or focal point, therefore suggesting an official or centralized platform, which when combined with "valo", creates a strong and misleading association with the Complainant.

The Complainant submits that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name since: i) the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name; ii) the Respondent has not acquired any trademark or service mark rights in the disputed domain name; iii) the Respondent is in no way affiliated, licensed or permitted by the Complainant to use the Complainant's mark in any way including to register the disputed domain name; and iv) the Respondent has not engaged in a bona fide offering of goods or services, since it has used the disputed domain name to attract users to its website, whose content was apt to mislead users into believing that it was affiliated with, or endorsed by, the Complainant, as it unlawfully displayed the Complainant's copyrighted materials, including images of VALORANT arsenal skins, and also provided links to purchase VALORANT accounts and offered users daily updates on the latest items available on the VALORANT store.

The Complainant states that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name because, considering the renowned and distinctive character of the Complainant's VALORANT trademark, as well as the images and descriptions displayed on the Complainant's official website, the Respondent was clearly aware of the Complainant and its trademarks at the time of registration and, in any case, a simple trademark search or Internet query would have revealed the Complainant's mark.

With reference to bad faith use, the Complainant states that, by pointing the disputed domain name to a website displaying copyrighted materials from the Complainant's game VALORANT, including exclusive arsenal skins, allowing users to browse weapon cosmetics, track updates on new in-game items, review their match history, and participate in features such as an "Esports Fantasy League", the Respondent clearly imitated the Complainant's services in order to mislead users into believing its website was operated or endorsed by the Complainant.

Moreover, the Complainant underlines that the Respondent's decision to withhold its contact information from the Whois records of the disputed domain name and ignore the detailed reports and notices regarding the disputed domain name submitted by the Complainant to the Registrar prior to this proceeding are further proof of the Respondent's bad faith registration and use.

B. Respondent

The Respondent sent two informal communications to the Center on September 16, 2025, asking information on how to proceed with the closure of the service and consequent take down of the website and confirming it did not wish to contest the Complaint but agreed to transfer the disputed domain name.

Following the temporary suspension of the proceeding requested by the Complainant, on October 24, 2025, the Respondent sent a further communication requesting clarification on possible future use of Valorant-related content that it wished to publish in a blog covering general VALORANT-related news, esports updates, and community content, and possibly develop tools using the official Riot Games API (following Riot's API Terms of Use).

On October 31, 2025, the Respondent sent a further email communication to the Center in which it confirmed its consent to settle the dispute with the Complainant.

6. Discussion and Findings

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 or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1. Indeed, the Complainant has provided evidence of valid trademark registrations for VALORANT.

The Panel notes that the disputed domain name entirely reproduces the first part of the Complainant's mark "valo" which can be considered to be a dominant feature of the Complainant's trademark. Moreover, as stated in section [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7, in cases of doubt it is permissible to have regard to the content of the website to which the disputed domain name resolves: "[i]n specific limited instances, while not a replacement as such for the typical side-by-side comparison, where a panel would benefit from affirmation as to confusing similarity with the complainant's mark, the broader case context such as website content trading off the complainant's reputation, or a pattern of multiple respondent domain names targeting the complainant's mark within the same proceeding, may support a finding of confusing similarity."

According to the records, before the start of the proceeding the Respondent's website was clearly targeting the Complainant and its trademarks, as it displayed images and information related to the VALORANT game as well as links to purchase VALORANT accounts.

Bearing in mind that the first requirement under the Policy is essentially a standing requirement to ensure that there are sufficient trademark rights and that there is a genuine dispute, the Panel finds that the Respondent's website was targeting the Complainant and its trademark. See, along these lines, *Sportswear Company S.P.A. v. Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC./ Yu Hong Chenz*, WIPO Case No. [DCO2021-0050](#).

The Panel also finds that the addition of the definite article "the" and the dictionary term "hub" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8. The gTLD ".com" can be disregarded under the first element confusing similarity test, being a standard registration requirement. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1.

Therefore, the Panel finds 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. As such, 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.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

According to the evidence on record, there is no relationship between the Complainant and the Respondent, and the Complainant has not authorized the Respondent to register or use its trademark or the disputed domain name. Moreover, there is no element from which the Panel could infer the Respondent's rights over the disputed domain name, or that the Respondent might be commonly known by the disputed domain name.

Furthermore, there is no evidence showing that the Respondent made use of or preparations to use the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial use without intention to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the VALORANT trademark. Indeed, according to the records, the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to divert users to a website displaying copyrighted materials from the Complainant's VALORANT game, including exclusive arsenal skins, allowing users to browse weapon cosmetics, track updates on new in-game items, review their match history, and participate in features such as an "Esports Fantasy League" as well as to purchase VALORANT accounts, thereby creating a likelihood of confusion and association with the Complainant and its trademark.

Therefore, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has also 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 the present case, the Panel notes that, in light of the prior registration and use of the VALORANT trademark in connection with the Complainant's popular VALORANT game, which has been promoted online via the Complainant's websites "www.riotgames.com" and "www.playvalorant.com", the Respondent was or should have been aware of the Complainant's trademark at the time of registration of the disputed domain name, which occurred only in August 2024. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.2.

Moreover, considering the redirection of the disputed domain name to a website displaying copyrighted materials from the Complainant's VALORANT game, including arsenal skins, allowing users to browse weapon cosmetics and providing links to purchase VALORANT accounts, the Respondent was clearly aware of, and intended to target, the VALORANT mark at the time of registration of the disputed domain name.

The Panel also finds that the use of the disputed domain name to redirect users to the website described above suggests that the Respondent intentionally attempted to attract Internet users to its website and/or to linked websites for commercial gain, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the VALORANT mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation or endorsement of the websites according to paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The disputed domain name currently does not resolve to an active website. Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the reputation of the Complainant's trademark, the prior use of the disputed domain name made by the Respondent and its failure to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, and finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

Therefore, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy as well.

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 <thevalohub.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Luca Barbero/

Luca Barbero

Sole Panelist

Date: December 9, 2025