

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

National Hockey League v. Ivan Ivankovich
Case No. D2025-3847

1. The Parties

Complainant is National Hockey League, United States of America (“United States”), represented by Greenberg Traurig, LLP, United States.

Respondent is Ivan Ivankovich, Canada.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain names are <worldcupofhockey2028.com> and <2028worldcupofhockey.com> which are 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 22, 2025. On September 23, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On September 23, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain names which differed from those in the Complaint (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC). The Center sent an email communication to Complainant on September 24, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. Complainant filed an amended Complaint on September 26, 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 Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on September 29, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 19, 2025. Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified Respondent’s default on October 20, 2025.

The Center appointed Gerardo Saavedra as the sole panelist in this matter on October 23, 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

Complainant, an unincorporated association originally organized in Canada and with offices at the United States, is a professional ice hockey league composed of 32 teams, 25 of which are located in the United States and 7 in Canada.

Complainant has rights over the WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark for which it holds (i) Canada registration No. TMA623384, registered on October 25, 2004, in class 41, and (ii) United States registration No. 2900202, registered on November 2, 2004, in class 41.

The disputed domain names were both registered on September 18, 2022. By the time the Complaint was filed, each disputed domain name resolved to a GoDaddy free parking page with hyperlinks apparently of pay-per-click ("PPC") nature.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy and requests that the disputed domain names be transferred to Complainant. Complainant's assertions may be summarized as follows.

Complainant is widely considered the world's premier professional hockey league and is followed by millions of fans all around the world. Teams within the league compete annually for the opportunity to win the Stanley Cup championship trophy, the oldest existing trophy to be awarded to a professional sports franchise in North America.

Starting in 1996, Complainant organized the World Cup of Hockey, an international ice hockey tournament, together with the National Hockey League Players Association ("NHLPA"). The World Cup of Hockey is the first international hockey championship to allow nations to field their top professional players and was held in 1996, 2004, and 2016. The 2016 World Cup of Hockey included eight teams: Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Russia, Sweden, Europe (consisting of players from European countries not already represented), and North America. Over 15 million viewers watched the tournament games on television in North America alone. In February 2025, Complainant announced the return of the World Cup of Hockey for February 2028.

The disputed domain names are confusingly similar to Complainant's WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark. The disputed domain names incorporate said mark in full. Numerous UDRP decisions have found that when a disputed domain name entirely incorporates a complainant's mark, that is sufficient to establish confusing similarity. The addition of "2028" to the WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark does not distinguish the disputed domain names but instead actually increases the likelihood of confusion based on the direct association of the year "2028" with Complainant's international hockey tournament as it is the year that Complainant and the NHLPA have publicly announced that the tournament will return.

Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names. Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain names, and Complainant has not authorized, or consented to Respondent's registration and use of domain names incorporating Complainant's WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark, or any confusingly similar variation thereof.

Respondent has not used or prepared to use the disputed domain names in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Both of the disputed domain names resolve to a parked GoDaddy page. Because Respondent is not currently using the disputed domain names for a website, Respondent is not using them for a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use under the UDRP.

Respondent registered and is using the disputed domain names in bad faith. Complainant's marks have a strong reputation and are substantially used worldwide.¹ Respondent had constructive knowledge of the WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark because of Complainant's trademark registrations.

Although the disputed domain names do not resolve to content, their passive holding demonstrates Respondent's bad faith. Complainant is not aware of any use of Complainant's WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY, other than in connection with the hockey tournaments Complainant organizes together with the NHLPA. The disputed domain names are so obviously connected with Complainant that their very use by someone with no connection to Complainant suggests opportunistic bad faith.

On June 19, 2025, prior to Complainant's discovery of the disputed domain name <2028worldcupofhockey.com>, Complainant's counsel sent correspondence to Respondent, using the online contact form provided by the Registrar, advising Respondent that the disputed domain name <worldcupofhockey2028.com> infringed Complainant's rights. By the time the Complaint was filed, Complainant had received no response. The fact that Respondent failed to respond to Complainant's correspondence is further evidence that said disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

In addition to the two disputed domain names, Complainant has become aware of two additional domain names, <worldcupofhockey2024.com> and <2024worldcupofhockey.com>, both registered through the Registrar using the same privacy service as the disputed domain names. Additionally, <2024worldcupofhockey.com> was registered on September 18, 2022 (the same date as the disputed domain names) and <worldcupofhockey2024.com> was registered on August 25, 2022 (three weeks prior to the registration of the disputed domain names). These additional domain names contain Complainant's WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark and the year "2024". These common elements constitute strong evidence that the disputed domain names and such additional two domain names were registered by Respondent in anticipation of coming editions of the World Cup of Hockey. Therefore, Respondent has been engaging in a pattern of bad faith registration and use of domain names targeting Complainant and its WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark.

Respondent used a proxy service to register the disputed domain names. Use of a privacy or proxy registration service to shield its identity and elude enforcement efforts by the legitimate mark owner demonstrates Respondent's bad faith use and registration of the disputed domain names.

B. Respondent

Respondent did not reply to Complainant's contentions.

¹ Complainant provided no evidence of such alleged reputation and worldwide use.

6. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 15(a) of the Rules instructs the Panel to “decide a complaint on the basis of the statements and documents submitted and in accordance with the Policy, these Rules and any rules and principles of law that it deems applicable”.

The lack of response from Respondent does not automatically result in a favorable decision for Complainant (WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition (“[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)”), section 4.3). The burden for Complainant, under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, is to show: (i) that each disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which Complainant has rights; (ii) that Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain names; and (iii) each disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Panel finds 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).

The entirety of the WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark is reproduced within each disputed domain name, albeit with the addition of the characters “2028” in each of them. The Panel finds the mark is recognizable within the disputed domain names and that such addition in the disputed domain names does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain names and the mark for the purposes of the Policy ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 1.7, 1.8, and 1.11.1).

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

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

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).

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names. There is no evidence in the case file of any of those, or of any other circumstances giving rise to a possible right to or legitimate interest in the disputed domain names by Respondent, but rather the opposite may be validly inferred.

The evidence in the file shows that the website associated with each disputed domain name showed hyperlinks, apparently of PPC nature. Further, the nature of each disputed domain name, reflecting Complainant’s mark in its entirety (though with the addition of “2028”), carries a risk of implied affiliation since Internet users may mistakenly identify them as belonging to or associated with Complainant ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1). The Panel finds Complainant has established a prima facie case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names² Respondent has not rebutted Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence

² See *Casio Keisanki Kabushiki Kaisha (Casio Computer Co., Ltd.) v. Jongchan Kim*, WIPO Case No. [D2003-0400](#): “There is no evidence that the Complainant authorized the Respondent to register the disputed domain name or to use the CASIO trademark, with or without immaterial additions or variants. These circumstances are sufficient to constitute a prima facie showing by the Complainant of absence of rights or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name on the part of the Respondent.”

demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1).

Having reviewed the case file, the Panel finds that Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain names constitutes bad faith under the Policy. Taking into consideration that the registration and use of Complainant's WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark significantly preceded the creation of the disputed domain names, and the composition of the disputed domain names, the Panel is of the view that Respondent deliberately targeted Complainant's mark at the time it registered the disputed domain names, which is indicative of bad faith.³

In the case at hand, the Panel notes the use of each disputed domain name for a parking website with links that may generate PPC revenue. The fact that the website associated to each disputed domain name appears to be a generic parking page created by a third party does not relieve Respondent from its responsibility for contents appearing on the websites associated with the disputed domain names.⁴

In any event, it seems to the Panel that there is no basis in the case file to conceive a legitimate use of the disputed domain names by Respondent where Complainant's mark is clearly being targeted in registration of the disputed domain names, most likely speculating in future tournaments identified by Complainant with its WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY mark.⁵ In the case at hand, Respondent's bad faith may also be deduced from the following facts: (i) Respondent is using Complainant's mark in the disputed domain names (albeit coupled with "2028") without Complainant's authorization; (ii) the risk of implied affiliation of the disputed domain names with Complainant's mark; (iii) Respondent's lack of response to Complainant's infringement online communication;⁶ and (iv) Respondent's failure to appear in this proceeding, which is indicative that Respondent lacks arguments and evidence to support its holding of the disputed domain names.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds that Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

³ See *Intel Corporation v. The Pentium Group*, WIPO Case No. [D2009-0273](#): "incorporation of a well-known trademark into a domain name by a registrant having no plausible explanation for doing so may be, in and of itself, an indication of bad faith."

⁴ See *Richemont International SA v. Hrach Aghajanyan / "This Domain Name is for sale..."*, WIPO Case No. [D2015-0543](#). See *G4S Limited v. Milen Radumilo*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-3910](#): "the use of a domain name that is deceptively similar to a trademark to obtain click-through-revenue is found to be bad faith use", and [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.5.

⁵ See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. See *Ferrari S.p.A. v. Ms. Lee Joohee (or Joo-Hee)*, WIPO Case No. [D2003-0882](#): "Respondent has provided no evidence or suggestion of a possible legitimate use of the Domain Name. Thus, in the words of Telstra, it is not possible to conceive of any plausible actual or contemplated active use of the Domain Name by the Respondent that would not be illegitimate." See also *Flight Refuelling Ltd v. Neog Inc*, WIPO Case No. [D2005-0503](#): "The Panel cannot conceive of a situation in which Respondent could use the name in good faith, and Respondent has not suggested that there are any."

⁶ See *Fenix International Limited v. Oleg Zabugrovskiy*, WIPO Case No. [D2021-3386](#): "failure by the Respondent to answer the Complainant's cease and desist letter suggests that the Respondent was aware that he has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, and that the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith." See also *Ebay Inc. v. Ebay4sex.com and Tony Caranci*, WIPO Case No. [D2000-1632](#), and *HSBC Finance Corporation v. Clear Blue Sky Inc. and Domain Manager*, WIPO Case No. [D2007-0062](#).

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 names <worldcupofhockey2028.com> and <2028worldcupofhockey.com> be transferred to Complainant.

/Gerardo Saavedra/

Gerardo Saavedra

Sole Panelist

Date: November 6, 2025