

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin v. nan nan, Joy company
Case No. D2025-4325

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, France, represented by Tmark Conseils, France.

The Respondent is nan nan, Joy company, India.

2. The Domain Names and Registrar

The disputed domain names <michelinfoodjourney.com>, <michelinpartnerships.com>, and <michelinstyleguide.com> are 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 October 22, 2025. On October 22, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On October 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 the named Respondent (UNKNOWN / Redacted for privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on October 24, 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 October 28, 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 October 30, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 19, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on November 20, 2025.

The Center appointed Francine Tan 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 a French corporation with a global presence selling tires and the Michelin Guide which ranks fine dining establishments by awarding “Michelin Stars”.

Established in 1889, the Complainant states that it has a strong reputation in the field of tire design and manufacturing, and is also highly involved in travel publications such as maps and guides, and in vehicle racing and rallies (e.g. Formula One and Motorcycle Grand Prix).

The Complainant is also famous for its annual Michelin Guide. The Complainant began publishing its travel/gastronomy guide in Europe in 1900 to encourage drivers to take road trips to local attractions. Among other things, the guide included anonymous European restaurant reviews that focused on the quality and flavor of food served, as well as mastery of culinary technique. The Michelin Star rating system has been used by the Complainant since 1926 to grade restaurants on their quality.

Due to the serious and unique approach for almost a century, the MICHELIN guide has become a best-seller, and now rates over 30,000 establishments in over 30 territories globally. Over 30 million MICHELIN guides have been sold worldwide.

The Complainant states that it has notably established a strong reputation through the famous “Guide Michelin”, and the “Michelin Stars” are now considered a hallmark of fine dining by many of the world’s top chefs.

The Complainant owns worldwide trademark registrations for MICHELIN, including the following:

- International trademark registration No. 1254506, registered on December 10, 2014;
- United States of America trademark registration No. 5775734, registered on June 11, 2019; and
- European Union trademark registration No. 013558366, registered on April 17, 2015.

The Complainant owns various domain names incorporating its MICHELIN trademark, including <michelin.com>, registered in 1993, and its subdomain <guide.michelin.com>.

The disputed domain names were registered on October 20, 2025. They resolve to identical webpages which prominently display the MICHELIN mark and a “Michelin Man” logo against a background of a culinary-themed image and contain “Log In” and “Sign Up” links.

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 names.

Notably, the Complainant contends that:

- The disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the Complainant's MICHELIN trademark. The MICHELIN trademark is well known due to its long and intensive use and promotions for more than a century. The disputed domain names reproduce the MICHELIN trademark, which is sufficient to establish confusing similarity. The addition of the terms such as "food" and "guide" is insufficient to cause the MICHELIN trade mark to lose its distinctive character but in fact reinforces the risk of confusion in the minds of Internet users as they are descriptive terms directly related to the Complainant's business sector.
- The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain names. The MICHELIN trademark has been used for many decades globally, and the MICHELIN trademark has been registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. The Complainant is the sole legitimate owner of the MICHELIN trademark. The Complainant has not authorized the Respondent to use the MICHELIN trademark, or to identify itself by any of the disputed domain names. The term "Michelin" is not a generic term, but a distinctive, famous, and registered trademark owned by the Complainant. There is therefore no legitimate reason why the Respondent would incorporate the MICHELIN mark in the disputed domain names. The Michelin Guide has been published for nearly 120 years and has established itself as one of the most internationally recognized markers of restaurant quality and is a symbol of culinary excellence. The Respondent must have therefore been aware of the MICHELIN mark at the time of registration of the disputed domain names. The Respondent has taken advantage of the Complainant's commercial interest in the MICHELIN mark, and registered the disputed domain names because of their connection to the Complainant and its trademark.
- The websites to which the disputed domain names resolve display the Complainant's MICHELIN mark in connection with culinary activities of the Michelin Guide and a reproduction of the so-called Michelin Bibendum (or the "Michelin Man" mascot). The Respondent's websites resemble the Complainant's official website, and it is clear that the Respondent was well aware of the MICHELIN brand at the time of registration. Internet users would be led to the Respondent's websites in the mistaken belief that the Complainant is the source of the Respondent's websites, or that the Complainant has sponsored, is affiliated with, or has endorsed the Respondent's websites. Consequently, there will be confusion as Internet users visiting the Respondent's sites will be doing so with the expectation of reaching the Complainant's website.
- The disputed domain names were registered and are being used in bad faith. The Complainant's MICHELIN trademark is well known worldwide and the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's prior rights in the MICHELIN mark when the disputed domain names were registered. The reproduction of the Complainant's MICHELIN mark suggests knowledge of the Complainant's rights at the time of registration of the disputed domain names. The fact that the entirety of the MICHELIN trademark was included as part of the disputed domain names makes it difficult to infer a legitimate use of the disputed domain names by the Respondent. The disputed domain names resolve to webpages which display the MICHELIN mark in connection with culinary activities of the Michelin Guide and reproduce the image of the Michelin Bibendum mascot. The Complainant's MICHELIN trademarks are mentioned several times on the Respondent's websites, which makes it clear that the Respondent is deliberately taking advantage of the Complainant's reputation by making Internet users think that the Respondent's websites are approved or sponsored by the Complainant. The Respondent is using its websites in a way that impersonates the Complainant. The Respondent has no other purpose than to disrupt the Complainant's business, which is conclusive evidence that the Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain names in bad faith.

B. Respondent

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

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 names. 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.

The Panel finds the MICHELIN mark is recognizable within the disputed domain names. Accordingly, the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the MICHELIN mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms here, "partnerships", "foodjourney", and "styleguide", may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain names and the MICHELIN mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

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 the disputed domain names.

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 names (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 names. 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 names such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise. The Respondent was not licensed or authorized by the Complainant to use the latter's MICHELIN trademark or to register domain names incorporating the trademark. There is no evidence that the Respondent is using the disputed domain names for any legitimate noncommercial or fair use, without intent for commercial gain. In fact, the Respondent's websites prominently display the Complainant's MICHELIN word mark, along with the Complainant's famous and well-recognized mascot, the Michelin Bibendum.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here, claimed as applicable to this case: impersonation/passing off can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1. Further, the Panel notes that the Respondent's websites request Internet users to "log in", or "sign up". This may be an attempt at phishing for the details of Internet users.

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.

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.

The disputed domain names incorporate the entirety of the Complainant's distinctive and well-known MICHELIN trademark with the addition of the terms "partnerships", "foodjourney", and "styleguide". Given the longstanding registration, the distinctiveness, and global reputation of the Complainant's MICHELIN mark, and the fact that the disputed domain names are used by the Respondent for webpages displaying the Complainant's MICHELIN trademark and a mascot, it is obvious that the Respondent knew of the Complainant and its MICHELIN trademarks at the time it registered the disputed domain names and specifically targeted the Complainant. The Panel concludes that the Respondent has "intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to [its] website 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 [its] web site or location or of a product or service on [its] web site or location", which constitutes bad faith per paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain names constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of 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 names <michelinpartnerships.com>, <michelinfoodjourney.com>, and <michelinstyleguide.com> be transferred to the Complainant

/Francine Tan/

Francine Tan

Sole Panelist

Date: December 9, 2025