

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Formula One Licensing BV v. De-sheel Morrison
Case No. D2025-4556

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Formula One Licensing BV, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), represented by Sheridans Solicitors, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is De-sheel Morrison, Ghana.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <f1ghana.com> is registered with Name.com, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on November 5, 2025. On November 5, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On November 6, 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 November 7, 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 November 10, 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 November 11, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was December 1, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on December 2, 2025.

The Center appointed Warwick A. Rothnie as the sole panelist in this matter on December 11, 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, a Dutch company, is a member of the Formula One group of companies. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Formula One Asset Management Limited, which according to the Complaint, holds all commercial rights in or pertaining to the FIA Formula One World Championship. The Complainant appears to be the intellectual property holding company for the group.

The Formula One World Championship was established in 1950 by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). The FIA has continued to operate the championship since that date.

Each year, there are approximately 24 Formula One races held around the world including the British Grand Prix at Silverstone in the United Kingdom, the Las Vegas Grand Prix, the Miami Grand Prix and the United States Grand Prix. Other Grands Prix are held as far apart as Australia, Japan and China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

In 2024, broadcasts of the Formula One championship attracted a cumulative audience of 1.6 billion viewers in over 180 countries.

In addition to "Grand Prix", the races are heavily promoted by reference to "Formula One", "Formula 1" and "F1". The Formula One social media channels have also gained 97 million social media followers. For example, the Panel has confirmed¹ that the group's Instagram account, F1, has 40.6 million followers; the Facebook account "Formual1", which features F1 prominently in both stylized and plain forms, has 15 million followers, the Formula 1 YouTube channel, which also features "F1" in stylized and plain forms, has 13.9 million subscribers; the @F1 TikTok channel has 13.3 million follows and has recorded 730.9 million likes.

The Formula One group of companies has also licensed the use of those trademarks extensively for use on or in connection with clothing, sportswear, shoes, outerwear and clothing accessories, jewellery, perfumes, glasses, stationery, home furnishings and photographs. The terms are also used extensively to promote their association with the sport by a range of global partners including Lenovo, Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, Heineken and DHL.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous registered trademarks for "F1" in both stylized and plain forms. By way of example only, the Complainant owns:

1. International Registration No 732134, F1, which has been registered since December 20, 1999 in respect of a wide range of goods and services in International Classes 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 34, 35, 38, 41 and 42. Through this International Registration protection has been extended to Austria, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland and Türkiye;

2. International Registration No 1360007, F1, which has been registered since February 17, 2017 in respect of a wide range of goods in International Classes 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39 and 41. Through this International Registration protection has been extended to some 60 jurisdictions, including Ghana where the trademark has been registered as Registered Trademark No 1360007; and

¹ See WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.8.

3. International Registration No 1398403, F1 (stylized), which has been registered since November 17, 2017 in respect of a wide range of goods and services in International Classes 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 25, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43 in some 62 jurisdictions, including Ghana, where the trademark has been registered as Registered Trademark No 1398403.

According to the Whois report, the disputed domain name was registered on June 20, 2023.

The disputed domain name resolves to a website which appears to be the website of F1 Ghana Limited, a haulage and logistics company based in Accra, Ghana. The website is in English. According to the website, F1 Ghana Limited is expert in cocoa evacuation, transportation of agricultural inputs and products, general transportation and logistics and warehousing services. The website also states that the company was incorporated in 2014.

The first capture by the Wayback Machine of the website to which the disputed domain name resolves was on June 20, 2024.

5. Discussion and Findings

No response has been filed. The Complaint and Written Notice have been sent, however, to the Respondent at the electronic and physical coordinates confirmed as correct by the Registrar in accordance with paragraph 2(a) of the Rules. Bearing in mind the duty of the holder of a domain name to provide and keep up to date correct Whois details, therefore, the Panel finds that the Respondent has been given a fair opportunity to present his or its case.

When a respondent has defaulted, paragraph 14(a) of the Rules requires the Panel to proceed to a decision on the Complaint in the absence of exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, paragraph 15(a) of the Rules requires the Panel to decide the dispute on the basis of the statements and documents that have been submitted and any rules and principles of law deemed applicable.

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy provides that in order to divest the Respondent of the disputed domain name, the Complainant must demonstrate each of the following:

- (i) the disputed 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 disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The first element that the Complainant must establish is that the disputed domain name is identical with, or confusingly similar to, the Complainant's trademark rights.

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 3.0](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has proven ownership of numerous registered trademarks for F1 in both plain script and stylised versions including in Ghana. The Complainant also contends, and the Panel accepts, that the trademark is very well-known having regard to the length and extent of its use.

The comparison of the disputed domain name to the Complainant's trademark simply requires a visual and aural comparison of the disputed domain name to the proven trademarks. This test is narrower than and

thus different to the question of “likelihood of confusion” under trademark law. Therefore, questions such as the scope of the trademark rights, the geographical location of the respective parties, the date they were acquired and other considerations that may be relevant to an assessment of infringement under trademark law are not relevant at this stage. Such matters, if relevant, may fall for consideration under the other elements of the Policy. See e.g. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

In undertaking that comparison, it is permissible in the present circumstances to disregard the generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) component as a functional aspect of the domain name system. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.

Disregarding the “.com” gTLD, the disputed domain name consists of the Complainant’s registered trademark and the geographical term “ghana”. As this requirement under the Policy is essentially a standing requirement, the addition of this term does not preclude a finding of confusing similarity. See e.g. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8. Apart from anything else, the Complainant’s trademark remains visually and aurally recognisable within the disputed domain name.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s trademark and the requirement under the first limb of the Policy is satisfied.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

The second requirement the Complainant must prove is that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides that the following circumstances can be situations in which the Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name:

- (i) before any notice to [the Respondent] of the dispute, [the Respondent’s] use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the [disputed] domain name or a name corresponding to the [disputed] domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services; or
- (ii) [the Respondent] (as an individual, business, or other organization) has been commonly known by the [disputed] domain name, even if [the Respondent] has acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or
- (iii) [the Respondent] is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the [disputed] domain name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

These are illustrative only and are not an exhaustive listing of the situations in which a respondent can show rights or legitimate interests in a domain name.

While 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 often impossible 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. 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 Respondent registered the disputed domain name after the Complainant began using the trademark and also after the Complainant had registered its trademark.

The Complainant states that it has not authorised the Respondent to use the disputed domain name. Nor is the Respondent affiliated with it or the Formula One corporate group.

The disputed domain name is not derived from the Respondent's name. Plainly, however, the disputed domain name can be seen as a derivation from the name of the company which appears to be operating the business being promoted from the website to which the disputed domain name resolves.

The Panel accepts that it was likely difficult for the Complainant to establish the nature, if any, of the association between the Respondent and the company whose business is apparently being promoted on the Respondent's website. For example, the Respondent is not identified on the Respondent's website as an officer or employee of the company. In the absence of evidence from either party, however, the Panel is forced to assume there is a connection of some sort as it would seem very unlikely that a website could resolve to the disputed domain name without the Respondent's involvement or at least co-operation. (For ease of reference, therefore, the Panel will refer to the website as the Respondent's website.)

The Complainant points out that the address given on the website is also the address of two other companies: Cocoa Merchants (GH) Limited (Cocoa Merchants) and Transroyal Company Limited (Tamsroyal). From the Google search results pages included in the Annexures to the Complaint, both companies appear to have some involvement in the purchase and/or transportation of cocoa beans. One of the telephone numbers on the Respondent's website is the same as the telephone number for Cocoa Merchants. The streetview of the address appears to show a sign identifying it as the premises of Cocoa Merchants only.

Based on this and a contention that not all the links on the Respondent's website are active – the social media links do not resolve to the social media accounts, the Complainant speculates whether the business is genuine or has ceased and adopted a new name.

The Panel notes first that there appears to be a direct conflict between the services for which the Complainant's trademark is registered and those which appear to be provided through the Respondent's website. However, the priority dates of the Complainant's trademarks registered in Ghana are after the date of claimed incorporation of the company operating the Respondent's website, 2014.

The Complainant has not contested the claim on the Respondent's website that the company was incorporated in 2014. While that date is only an assertion on a website, the onus is on the Complainant to prove the Respondent does not have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and so, if the Complainant wished to contest that date, it should have provided some basis for that.

Although it is before the date of the trademark registrations in Ghana, 2014 is some 14 or 15 years after the date of registration of the Complainant's first registered trademark identified in section 4 above – which does not extend to Ghana. However, the Panel considers it very likely that the Complainant's F1 trademark was very well-known by 2014 including in Ghana.

Even acknowledging it is a two character alpha-numeric string, "F1" cannot be said to be directly descriptive of the services apparently being offered from the Respondent's website. In the context of a name for a company providing haulage and logistics services, the expression can be seen as conveying the idea of a fast or speedy service but it does so only because of the reputation and association of that expression arising from use by or with the licence of the Complainant for Grand Prix car racing. The Panel considers that would very likely have been the case in 2014.

Given that and the absence of any explanation from the Respondent suggesting the derivation of the company name in some way independently of the Complainant's trademark and Grand Prix racing, on the limited record in this case, therefore, it appears likely that the company name, F1 Ghana Limited, was adopted to trade on the reputation in the Complainant's trademark. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the adoption of the company name does not qualify as being in good faith under the Policy sufficient to confer rights or legitimate interests on the basis of paragraph 4(c)(ii) of the Policy.

Accordingly, the Panel finds the Complainant has established the second requirement under the Policy also.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Under the third requirement of the Policy, the Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name has been both registered and used in bad faith by the Respondent. These are conjunctive requirements; both must be satisfied for a successful complaint: see e.g. *Group One Holdings Pte Ltd v. Steven Hafto* WIPO Case No. [D2017-0183](#).

For the reasons discussed in Section 5B above, it appears likely that the Respondent was well aware of the Complainant's trademark and the associated reputation when the business F1 Ghana Limited adopted "F1" as its name and for the disputed domain name. As the Complainant contends merely appending the country name "Ghana" to that trademark conveys the impression that the business being promoted through the website is the representative of the Formula One group in Ghana. Targeting the Complainant's trademark in that fashion in circumstances where the Panel has found that the Respondent does not have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name constitutes registration in bad faith under the Policy.

Correspondingly, use of the disputed domain name to promote a business providing services directly in conflict with the services covered by the Complainant's trademark in circumstances where the Respondent has been found not to have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name constitutes use in bad faith under the Policy.

In circumstances where the Respondent has not sought to claim, let alone establish, that he or she has rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, therefore, the Panel finds the Respondent has registered and used it in bad faith.

Accordingly, the Complainant has established all three requirements under the Policy.

6 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 <f1ghana.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Warwick A. Rothnie/

Warwick A. Rothnie

Sole Panelist

Date: December 24, 2025