

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

NIKE, Inc. v. Robert Choe
Case No. D2025-5189

1. The Parties

The Complainant is NIKE, Inc., United States of America (“United States”), represented by Stobbs IP Limited, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is Robert Choe, United States.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <nike-licensing.com> (the “Domain Name”) 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 December 11, 2025. On December 12, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On December 13, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name that differed from the named Respondent (Unknown/Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on December 15, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to amend the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on December 22, 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”), 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 amended Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 23, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for a Response was January 12, 2026. The Respondent did not submit a response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on January 13, 2026.

The Center appointed A. Justin Ourso III as the panelist in this matter on January 19, 2026. 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 has been selling athletic footwear and apparel worldwide under its globally well-known NIKE trademark.

The Complainant owns a United States registration, No. 1,243,248, for its NIKE trademark, issued on June 21, 1983, with a first use as early as 1972, in Class 42 for retail footwear and apparel store services; a United States registration, No. 1,945,654, for its NIKE trademark, issued on January 2, 1996, with a first use as early as 1971, in Class 25 for a full line of sports clothing; and a United States registration, No. 6,124,779, for its NIKE trademark, issued on August 11, 2020, in Class 35 for retail store services and online retail store services featuring apparel and related goods, and sporting goods and related products; and other registrations in this and other jurisdictions around the world.

The Complainant owns over 2,000 domain names consisting of or incorporating its NIKE trademark, including the domain name <nike.com>, registered on March 4, 1995, and operates its official website at “www.nike.com”, on which the Complainant has advertised and sold its products since 1997.

The Respondent, using a privacy service, registered the Domain Name on December 10, 2024, without authorization from the Complainant. Prior to the filing of the Complaint, the Domain Name initially resolved to a web page parked with the Registrar at “www.nike-licensing.com/lander” featuring pay-per-click (“PPC”) advertising links, including links to sites offering competing goods and offering the Domain Name for sale. Then, before the filing of the Complaint, the Domain Name resolved to a web page parked with the Registrar at “www.nike-licensing.com/lander” that did not have PPC links but offered the Domain Name for sale. During the preparation of this Decision, when using the Edge browser, the Domain Name resolved to a blank web page at “www.nike-licensing.com/lander”. When using the Firefox browser, the Domain Name resolved to a web page at “www.searchhounds.com” that contained a notice that it was parked with the Registrar, offered the Domain Name for sale, and contained PPC links.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy to transfer the Domain Name, which transfer it requested. Notably, the Complainant contends that it has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks right or legitimate interests; the Complainant engages in well-known licensing transactions; the Complainant owns domain names that are synonymous with or related to licensing, such as <nikefranchise.net> and <nikecollab.com>; the use of the word “licensing” in the Domain Name falsely implies that the Respondent is affiliated with the Complainant and is authorized to transact licensing on behalf of the Complainant; and the Respondent targeted the Complainant to trade on its mark.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not submit a response to the Complaint.

6. Discussion and Findings

A complainant must prove three elements to obtain relief: (i) the domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark in which the complainant has rights; (ii) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name; and (iii) the respondent registered and is using the domain name in bad faith. Policy, paragraph 4(a).

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

On the first element, the Complainant must prove that (1) it has rights in a trademark, and (2) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to this trademark. Policy, paragraph 4(a)(i).

The Panel finds that the Complainant's registrations establish its trademark rights. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.2.1.

The Domain Name incorporates the entire trademark, and the trademark is readily recognizable within the Domain Name, notwithstanding the addition of the element "-licensing" after the trademark. The Panel finds that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to the trademark. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 1.7 and 1.8. Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the Complainant has proven the first element: the Domain Name is confusingly similar to a trademark in which it has rights.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

The Respondent has not claimed the existence of any circumstance under the Policy, paragraph 4(c), that demonstrates that a respondent has rights to, or legitimate interests in, a domain name. The Complainant, on the other hand, has shown that it established its trademark rights long before the Respondent registered the Domain Name, it has not authorized the Respondent to use its trademark or the Domain Name, and the Respondent is not known by the mark. This is a showing prima facie that the Respondent lacks any rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name under the Policy, paragraph 4(a)(ii), shifting the burden of production on this second element to the Respondent to come forward with relevant evidence proving rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1. The Respondent has not submitted any evidence to rebut the prima facie showing.

Importantly, the Panel also finds that the Domain Name previously resolved to a web page featuring PPC links that competed with the Complainant and its website. The Panel finds that the Respondent's inclusion of the descriptive element "-licensing" in the Domain Name, suggests ownership, sponsorship, or endorsement by the trademark owner ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1). This false implied affiliation with the Complainant and this use of the Domain Name is not a bona fide commercial use, a legitimate noncommercial use, or a fair use of the Domain Name. To the contrary, the evidence shows an intended use for the Respondent's commercial gain. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.

Additionally, the Panel finds that the Registrar identified the Registrant by a name that does not resemble the trademark or the Domain Name and provided an email address for the Respondent that does not resemble the trademark or the Domain Name, which corroborate that the Respondent is not known by the Domain Name. Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the Complainant has proven the second element: the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Policy provides that the following circumstance is "evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith: [. . .] by using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your web site . . . , by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your web site or location or of a product or service on your web site". Policy, paragraph 4(b)(iv).

The Panel finds that the descriptive element, “-licensing”, in the Domain Name betrays an intent to associate misleadingly the Domain Name with the Complainant’s trademark. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1. Additionally, because of the distinctiveness and fame of the Complainant’s mark; the lack of any evidence that the Respondent is associated with licensing; the failure of the Respondent to respond to the Complaint, as amended, or to provide evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use; the Respondent’s concealing its identity by using a privacy service without explanation; and the implausibility of any good-faith use for the Domain Name, the Panel finds that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant’s trademark, and of its rights in the mark, at the time that the Respondent registered the Domain Name; the Respondent’s registration and use of the Domain Name targeted the Complainant’s mark; and the Domain Name is intended to attract, misleadingly and deceptively, customers and potential customers of the Complainant, for the Respondent’s commercial gain. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 3.1.4, 3.2.1, and 3.2.2.

During the preparation of this Decision, the Domain Name did not resolve to an active, functioning website when using the Edge browser. However, the Panel agrees with those panels who have consistently found that non-use of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith, under the doctrine of passive holding, when other elements are present that demonstrate bad faith, including those elements specified in the preceding paragraph. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Additionally, and importantly, when using the Firefox browser, the Domain Name resolved to a web page at a URL that did not use the Domain Name, but offered the Domain Name for sale on the redirected landing page, and featured third-party PPC links. If this Panel were not to find bad faith and transfer the Domain Name, the Respondent could resume the use of the Domain Name for a parked website featuring competitive PPC links, or worse.

These findings compel the Panel to conclude that the Respondent intentionally registered the Domain Name in bad faith to take unfair advantage of the Complainant’s trademark and that the Respondent has used the Domain Name in bad faith intentionally to attract Internet users to its site for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s trademark as to the source of the site or the source of the goods or services offered on the site, in violation of the Policy, paragraph 4(b)(iv). The current intermittent or non-use of the Domain Name does not change the Panel’s finding of the Respondent’s bad faith as discussed above. Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the Complainant has proven the third element: the Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

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 <nike-licensing.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/A. Justin Ourso III/

A. Justin Ourso III

Sole Panelist

Date: February 2, 2026