ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
LPL Financial LLC v. Diekola Ridwan
Case No. D2026-3192

1. The Parties

The Complainant is LPL Financial LLC, United States of America, represented by Hogan Lovells Cadwalader (Paris) LLP, France.

The Respondent is Diekola Ridwan, Nigeria.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <lpl-llc.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 21, 2026. On July 21, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 21, 2026, 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 July 22, 2026, 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 July 23, 2026.

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 August 4, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 24, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on August 25, 2026.

The Center appointed Linda Chang as the sole panelist in this matter on August 27, 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, founded in 1989, is one of the leaders in the retail financial advice market and is considered one of the largest independent broker-dealer in the United States of America. The Complainant serves independent financial advisors and financial institutions, providing them with the technology, research, clearing and compliance services, and practice management programs. Since 2010, the Complainant has been publicly trading on NASDAQ. The Complainant provides an integrated platform of brokerage and investment advisory services to more than 32,000 investment advisors and approximately 1,100 institution-based investment programs nationwide, managing over USD 2.3 trillion in advisory and brokerage assets. The Complainant has more than 9,900 employees and reported gross profit of over USD 1.59 billion in the First Quarter of 2026.

The Complainant also operates official accounts on various social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and YouTube, to strengthen its online presence.

The Complainant owns numerous trademark registrations for LPL and LPL FINANCIAL, including:

- The United States of America Trademark LPL Registration No. 1801076, registered on October 26, 1993, in class 36;

- The European Union Trademark LPL Registration No. 018653022, registered on May 26, 2022, in class 36; and

- The United States of America Trademark LPL Financial Registration No. 3662425, registered on August 4, 2009, in classes 36 and 42.

The Complainant owns numerous domain names incorporating its LPL trademark, including <lpl.com>, which was registered on August 2, 1994, and has been used as the Complainant's official website to promote its business.

The Respondent is reportedly based in Nigeria. The disputed domain name was registered on May 30, 2026. Presently, the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive website. According to the Complainant's evidence, the disputed domain name previously resolved to a website that displayed the logo LPL Premium, which differs from the Complainant's LPL Financial trademark only for the substitution of the term "financial" to "premium", on both the webpage and the favicon. The website represented itself as a trading platform offering various financial derivatives, including Forex CFDs, Index CFDs, and Stock CFDs. The website also claimed to provide traders of all levels with knowledge and technology, and invited Internet users to open an account.

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:

i) the disputed domain name comprises the Complainant's LPL trademark, followed by a hyphen, the term "llc", and the generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com". The incorporation of the Complainant's LPL trademark in the disputed domain name is sufficient to establish confusing similarity for purposes of the first element. The addition of the hyphen and the term "llc" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the Complainant's LPL trademark, as the Complainant's LPL trademark remains clearly recognizable within the disputed domain name. The gTLD ".com" may be disregarded in the assessment of confusing similarity. Therefore, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's LPL trademark;

ii) the Complainant has not authorized the Respondent to use its LPL trademark in any manner.
The Respondent holds no trademark rights corresponding to the disputed domain name and has not been commonly known by the disputed domain name;

iii) the Respondent is neither using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services nor making any legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. Rather, the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to create the false impression that the disputed domain name and the associated website are affiliated with, or otherwise connected to, the Complainant. Moreover, the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name suggests that it was likely engaged in a phishing scheme, thereby creating a risk that Internet users would be misled into making investment payments to the Respondent;

iv) the disputed domain name comprises the Complainant's LPL trademark together with the term "llc", which is commonly understood as an abbreviation for "Limited Liability Company" and refers to the Complainant's corporate form. Accordingly, the composition of the disputed domain name is likely to mislead Internet users into believing that the disputed domain name is affiliated with the Complainant;

v) the Complainant's LPL trademark is well known in connection with the financial advisory services. It is implausible that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant and the LPL trademark. The composition of the disputed domain name, coupled with the Respondent's prior use of the disputed domain name indicates that the Respondent was well aware of the Complainant and its LPL trademark at the time of registering the disputed domain name;

vi) the Respondent has used the disputed domain name in an attempt to create the false impression that the disputed domain name and the associated website are affiliated with the Complainant, thereby attracting, for commercial gain, Internet users to the website associated with the disputed domain name by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website; and

vii) the fact that the disputed domain name currently resolves to an inactive website does not prevent a finding of the Respondent's bad faith nor does it cure the Respondent's prior bad faith use of the disputed domain name.

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 name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("WIPO Overview 3.1"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of the LPL trademark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The gTLD ".com" as a standard registration requirement may be disregarded in the assessment of confusing similarity under the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.11.1.

The entirety of the Complainant's LPL trademark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. While the hyphen and the terms "llc" are included, the Complainant's LPL trademark remains clearly recognizable in the disputed domain name. The Panel finds that the addition of an hyphen and "llc" term do not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the LPL trademark. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the LPL trademark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, sections 1.7 and 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 a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving that 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 3.1, section 2.1.

The information in the case file shows that:

- the Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant and has not been authorized to use the Complainant's LPL trademark in any form;

- there is no evidence proving that the Respondent holds any trademark rights corresponding to the disputed domain name, or has been commonly known by the disputed domain name;

- the disputed domain name previously resolved to a website that displayed the logo LPL Premium, which is almost identical to the Complainant's registered logo and differs from the Complainant's LPL Financial trademark only for the substitution of the term "financial" for "premium", on both the webpage and the favicon. The website presented itself as a trading platform offering various financial derivatives, including Forex CFDs, Index CFDs, and Stock CFDs. The website further claimed to provide traders of all levels with knowledge and technology, and invited Internet users to open an account, without prominently and accurately disclosing the absence of relationship between the Parties. Such use of the disputed domain name prevents a finding that the Respondent was using the disputed domain name in relation to a bona fide offering of goods or services, or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use. Rather, the above facts demonstrate that the Respondent's conduct with the disputed domain name is aimed to deliberately exploit the Complainant's LPL trademark and the confusingly similar logo LPL Premium to offer financial derivatives and related knowledge and technology which are closely connected to the Complainant's core business, thereby likely misleading Internet users into believing that the disputed domain name and the associated website are affiliated with or endorsed by, the Complainant, for commercial gain;

- the manner in which the Respondent used the disputed domain name makes it reasonable to infer that the Respondent may use the disputed domain name for unlawful activities, including phishing and impersonation, which further prevents a finding of rights or legitimate interests for the Respondent;

- the composition of the disputed domain name, incorporating the Complainant's LPL trademark, together with the term "llc" commonly understood as an abbreviation for "Limited Liability Company" and corresponding to the Complainant's corporate form, when considered alongside the Respondent's prior use of the disputed domain name, supports a finding of the Respondent's intention of taking unfair advantage of the likelihood of confusion between the disputed domain name and the Complainant's mark as to the origin or affiliation of the website associated with the dispute domain name; and

- no other factors demonstrate any rights or legitimate interests of the Respondent in the disputed domain name.

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.

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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Complainant obtained the trademark registration for LPL as early as October 26, 1993, which significantly predates the registration date of the disputed domain name (May 30, 2026). According to the Complainant's evidence, the Panel accepts that the Complainant and its LPL trademark have gained a certain degree of reputation and recognition in financial advisor industry through its extensive use and advertising. The Respondent registered the disputed domain name that fully incorporates the Complainant's LPL trademark, together with the term "llc" corresponding to the Complainant's corporate form and resolved it to a website displaying the logo LPL Premium, which differs from the Complainant's LPL Financial trademark only for the substitution of the term "financial" for "premium". The website purportedly offered various financial derivatives, as well as related knowledge and technology, which are closely connected to the Complainant's core business, and invited Internet users to open an account. In view of these circumstances, the Panel determines that the Respondent, more likely than not, had actual knowledge of the Complainant and the LPL trademark at the time it registering the disputed domain name, and bad faith is found.

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 3.1, section 3.2.1.

The disputed domain name resolves to an inactive website at the time of this Decision but was previously used to host a website displaying the confusingly similar logo LPL Premium and purportedly offering services closely connected to the Complainant's core business and inviting Internet users to open an account. The Panel holds that by selecting a domain name confusingly similar to the Complainant's LPL trademark, and using it in the manner as described, the Respondent obviously intended to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the disputed domain name and the associated website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's LPL trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website associated with the disputed domain name, which constitutes bad faith within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Given the Respondent's prior use of the disputed domain name, the current passive holding of the disputed domain name does not preclude a finding of bad faith.

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 name <lpl-llc.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Linda Chang/
Linda Chang
Sole Panelist
Date: September 10, 2026