ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
LPL Financial LLC v. Brown Harry, Finivest
Case No. DIO2026-0037

1. The Parties

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

The Respondent is Brown Harry, Finivest, United Kingdom.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <lpltrade.io> is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on July 22, 2026. On July 23, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 24, 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 (Redacted for Privacy, Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 24, 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 29, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint and amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the .IO Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy”), the Rules for .IO Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for .IO 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 July 30, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 19, 2026. The Respondent sent its Response to the Complainant on July 30, 2026, without copying the Center, which the Complainant sent to the Center on the same day. The Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on August 3, 2026, supplementing its Response. Accordingly, the Center notified Commencement of Panel Appointment Process on August 20, 2026.
The Center appointed Jeremy Speres as the sole panelist in this matter on September 1, 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 is a financial services company and an independent broker-dealer founded in 1989 that trades under the LPL mark, which prior panels under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("UDRP") have recognized as being well-known. See *LPL Financial LLC v. Navy Sheree, Stacie Dusty, Miracle Gay, Malvina Lorelai*, WIPO Case No. D2025-3897.

The Complainant's LPL mark is the subject of various trademark registrations in numerous jurisdictions, including United Kingdom Trademark Registration No. UK00003753607 LPL (word), registered on May 13, 2022.

The Complainant owns the domain name <lpl.com> (registered in 1994).

The disputed domain name was registered on June 4, 2026, and presently does not resolve to any active website as a result of the Complainant's take-down efforts. The Complainant's evidence establishes that the disputed domain name previously resolved to a website entitled "LPL Finance" and "Gateway to Smart Trading", offering financial trading services through various trading plans priced from USD 250 to USD 100,000. The website listed the address of the Complainant's Fort Mill, United States office. The Complainant further asserts that the website displayed the Complainant's United States Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") registration number.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and used in bad faith in order to operate a fraudulent advance-fee trading scheme taking advantage of confusion with the Complainant's well-known LPL mark.

B. Respondent

The Respondent contends that the disputed domain name was registered solely for a brief, non-commercial, internal technical experiment involving an Artificial Intelligence ("AI") website-deployment tool, and that he had no knowledge of the Complainant or its trademark when registering it. He argues that he selected the disputed domain name while manually searching the Registrar's platform for domain names containing "trade", mistakenly understanding "lpl" to be a generic abbreviation. He maintains that the financial trading content was generated algorithmically, that the site was never promoted, indexed, or used to generate revenue or attract users, and that he never intended to impersonate LPL, divert customers, or profit from its reputation.

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.[1]

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

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms, here "trade", may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, 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 a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in proceedings under the Policy is on the complainant, ioDRP 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.

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 Complainant's well-known LPL mark is wholly contained within the disputed domain name, which includes the word "trade" within its composition which is relevant to the Complainant's business. 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.

While testing an AI website-development tool, as the Respondent claims, could, in principle, constitute a legitimate purpose, the Respondent has provided no evidence of such testing, and the actual content of the Respondent's website is inconsistent with a bona fide use of the disputed domain name.

[1] Noting the substantive similarities between the Policy and the UDRP, the Panel has referred to prior UDRP cases and the WIPO Overview 3.1, where appropriate.

For the reasons discussed in relation to bad faith below, it is likely that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant's mark. The Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name in these circumstances cannot represent a bona fide offering of goods or services under paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy and cannot confer rights or legitimate interests. *Sistema de Ensino Poliedro Vestibulares Ltda., Editora Poliedro Ltda. v. Anonymize, Inc. / STANLEY PACE*, WIPO Case No. D2022-1981.

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

C. Registered or 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.

For the following reasons, the Panel finds that it is more likely than not that the Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain name to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant's mark for the Respondent's commercial gain, falling squarely within paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The Complainant's mark is well-known within the financial services sector. The disputed domain name's use has been for services within that sector, and the composition of the disputed domain name, including "trade", likewise associates it with that sector. This points to targeting of the Complainant. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.2.1.

The use of the Complainant's office address and purported use of its SEC registration number on the Respondent's erstwhile website created the false impression that it is the Complainant that operated that website, which points to an intention on the Respondent's part to impersonate the Complainant. *Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A. v. Intesasanpaolo*, WIPO Case No. D2009-1550. This also renders the Respondent's claim to have been unaware of the Complainant implausible.

The Complainant points to *LPL Financial LLC v. Navy Sheree, Stacie Dusty, Miracle Gay, Malvina Lorelai*, WIPO Case No. D2025-3897, which involved the domain name <lpl-finex.net> and a very similar website also featuring the title "Gateway to Smart Trading" and the same colour scheme, the same pricing packages and identical or very similar wording as the website in the present matter. These similarities suggest that the Respondent, potentially operating under a pseudonym, may have targeted the Complainant before. The Panel need not come to a final determination regarding a potential connection to the prior case but notes that in any event such similar conduct was found to support a finding of bad faith in that case.

The Respondent claims that his website content was generated automatically by AI. The Respondent has, however, provided no evidence in support of these contentions. The Panel nevertheless notes that the Respondent expressly stated that he did not seek to blame the AI tool for the content appearing on the disputed domain name and accepted responsibility for the resulting likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark. In any event, even if the website content was generated automatically by AI, the Panel considers that such circumstances would not relieve the Respondent of responsibility for the content published under a domain name registered and controlled by him. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.5.

The Respondent's subsequent apology to the Complainant is effectively an admission of the harm likely to have befallen the Complainant as a result of the disputed domain name and its website. The Respondent's consent to cancellation or transfer of the disputed domain name was qualified, requesting that the Panel make no finding of bad faith. In terms of WIPO Overview 3.1, section 4.10, a panel may proceed to a full decision on the merits rather than treat consent as dispositive where (among other scenarios) the respondent has expressly disclaimed bad faith while consenting to the remedy, and where the complainant has not agreed to accept the consent and has expressed a preference for a recorded decision on the merits. Both scenarios are met here.

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

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 <lpltrade.io> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Jeremy Speres/
Jeremy Speres
Sole Panelist
Date: September 7, 2026