Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-101245

Case number	CAC-UDRP-101245
Time of filing	2016-07-20 11:47:48
Domain names	FRENCHOPEN2016-LIVE.ORG

Case administrator

Name	Nikola Balaš (Case admin)

Complainant

Organization	FEDERATION FRANCAISE DE TENNIS (FFT)

Complainant representative

Organization	Nameshield (Maxime Benoist)

Respondent

Name	kapil Kumar

OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

N/A

IDENTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The Complainant is the holder of the international trademark for the word mark FRENCH OPEN, registered under No. 538170 in class 3 on June 22, 1989 and duly renewed (hereinafter, the “FRENCH OPEN trademark”).

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Complainant, the FEDERATION FRANCAISE DE TENNIS, promotes, organizes and develops tennis in France. It is the organizer of the International of France at Roland Garros, the on Grand Slam competing on clay. The tournament is also known as the “French Open”.

The disputed domain name <frenchopen2016-live.org> was registered on April 26, 2016. The disputed domain name does not resolve to any webpage. On May 6, 2016, Complainant’s agent sent a cease-and-desist letter to Respondent, to which no response was received.

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

PARTIES' CONTENTIONS:

COMPLAINANT:
The Complainant considers the disputed domain name to be confusingly similar to trademarks in which it has rights. The Complainant claims that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. According to the Complainant, the Respondent does not use the disputed domain name in connection with any legitimate use. Also, according to the Complainant, the Respondent has not been commonly known by the disputed domain name. Finally, the Complainant considers that the disputed domain name was registered and being used in bad faith.

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

RIGHTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown that the Domain Name is identical to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(i)of the Policy).

NO RIGHTS OR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the Respondent to have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(ii)of the Policy).

BAD FAITH

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(iii)of the Policy).

PROCEDURAL FACTORS

The Panel is satisfied that all procedural requirements under UDRP were met and there is no other reason why it would be inappropriate to provide a decision.

PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Paragraph 15 of the Rules provides that the Panel is to decide the complaint on the basis of the statements and documents submitted in accordance with the Policy, the Rules and any rules and principles of law that it deems applicable.

The onus is on the Complainant to make out its case and it is apparent, both from the terms of the Policy and the decisions of past UDRP panels, that the Complainant must show that all three elements set out in Paragraph 4 (a) of the Policy have been established before any order can be made to transfer a domain name. As the proceedings are civil, the standard of proof is the balance of probabilities.

Thus for the Complainant to succeed it must prove, within the meaning of Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy and on the balance of probabilities that:

1. The domain names are identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
2. The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain names; and
3. The domain names have been registered and are being used in bad faith.

The Panel has therefore dealt with each of these requirements in turn.

Confusing similarity of the Domain Name with existing rights

The Complainant must first establish that there is a trademark or service mark in which it has rights. Since Complainant is the holder of the registered FRENCH OPEN trademark. Moreover, a Google search on the expression FRENCH OPEN provides many results that are linked with the Complainant and Complainant's organization of major tennis tournament, the

International of France at Roland Garros.

The Disputed Domain Name <frenchopen2016-live.org> reproduces Complainant's trademark FRENCH OPEN in its entirety, but adds the numbers "2016" – referring to the year 2016 – and the generic term "live". The Panel is of the opinion that the mere addition of non-distinctive text to a complainant's trademark constitutes confusing similarity, as set out in paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy (See Karen Millen Fashions Limited v. Akili Heidi, WIPO Case No. D2012-1395, where the domain name <karenmillenoutlet-australia.com> was held to be confusingly similar to the KAREN MILLEN trademark; Belstaff S.R.L. v. Jason Lau, Sharing, WIPO Case No. D2012 0783, where the domain name <belstaffjacken-outlet.info> was held to be confusingly similar to the BELSTAFF trademark; Lime Wire LLC v. David Da Silva/Contactprivacy.com, WIPO Case No. D2007 1168, where the domain name <downloadlimewirenow.com> was held to be confusingly similar to the LIME WIRE trademark, especially with addition of the word "download" because users typically download complainant's software.).

Accordingly, the Complainant has made out the first of the three elements that it must establish.

No legitimate rights

Under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy, the Complainant has the burden of establishing that Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain names.

It is established case law that it is sufficient for the Complainant to make a prima facie showing that Respondent has no right or legitimate interest in the Domain Name in order to shift the burden of proof to the Respondent (See Champion Innovations, Ltd. V. Udo Dussling (45FHH), WIPO case No. D2005-1094 (championinnovation.com); Croatia Airlines d.d. v. Modern Empire Internet Ltd., WIPO case No. D2003-0455 (croatiaairlines.com); Belupo d.d. v. WACHEM d.o.o., WIPO case No. 2004-0110 (belupo.com).).

The Panel notes that the Respondent has not been commonly known by the domain name and that the Respondent has not acquired trademark or service mark rights. Respondent's use and registration of the disputed domain name was not authorized by the Complainant. There are no indications that a connection between Complainant and Respondent existed.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established a prima facie case, which was not refuted, and that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. Therefore, the Complainant has satisfied the second requirement that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name, under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

Bad faith

Complainant must prove on the balance of probabilities that the disputed domain name was registered in bad faith and that it is being used in bad faith (See e.g. Telstra Corporation Limited v. Nuclear Marshmallow, WIPO Case No. D2000-0003; Control Techniques Limited v. Lektronix Ltd, WIPO Case No. D2006 1052).

Policy Paragraph 4(b) provides a non-exclusive list of factors, any one of which may demonstrate bad faith registration and use, namely:

According to the Panel, the awareness of a respondent of the complainant and/or the complainant's trademark rights at the time of registration can evidence bad faith (See Red Bull GmbH v. Credit du Léman SA, Jean-Denis Deletraz, supra; Nintendo of America Inc v. Marco Beijen, Beijen Consulting, Pokemon Fan Clubs Org., and Pokemon Fans Unite, supra, where POKÉMON was held to be a well-known mark of which the use by someone without any connection or legal relationship with the complainant suggested opportunistic bad faith; BellSouth Intellectual Property Corporation v. Serena, Axel, WIPO Case No. D2006-0007, where it was held that the respondent acted in bad faith when registering the disputed domain name, because widespread and long-standing advertising and marketing of goods and services under the trademarks in question,

the inclusion of the entire trademark in the domain name, and the similarity of products implied by addition of telecommunications services suffix (“voip”) suggested knowledge of the complainant’s rights in the trademarks). In the instant case, the Panel finds that Respondent must have had knowledge of Complainant’s rights in the FRENCH OPEN trademark at the moment it registered the Disputed Domain Name, since Complainant’s trademark is a widely known trademark.

Respondent is not using the Disputed Domain Name. According to the Panel, the passive holding of the Disputed Domain Name may amount to bad faith when it is difficult to imagine any plausible future active use of the Disputed Domain Name by Respondent that would be legitimate and not infringing Complainant’s well-known mark or unfair competition and consumer protection legislation (See Inter-IKEA v Polanski, WIPO Case No. D2000 1614; Inter-IKEA Systems B.V. v. Hoon Huh, WIPO Case No. D2000 0438; Telstra Corporation Limited v. Nuclear Marshmallows, supra). The fact that a complainant’s trademark has a strong reputation and is widely used and the absence of evidence whatsoever of any actual or contemplated good faith use are further circumstances that may evidence bad faith registration and use in the event of passive use of domain names (Telstra Corporation Limited v. Nuclear Marshmallows, supra).

In the present case, the Panel is of the opinion that Complainant’s FRENCH OPEN trademark is widely known, which makes it difficult to conceive any plausible legitimate future use of the Disputed Domain Name by Respondent.

The Panel also notes that Respondent did not respond to Complainant’s cease-and-desist letter. Therefore, the Panel considers that the inference of bad faith is strengthened.

Considering the above, the Panel finds that the Complainant has made out the three elements that it must establish.

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

AND THE DISPUTED DOMAIN NAME(S) IS (ARE) TO BE

1. **FRENCHOPEN2016-LIVE.ORG**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	**Flip Petillion**

DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2016-08-31

Publish the Decision