

Professional athletes' salaries

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In today's society, the American people can't get enough of their favorite teams and athletes. Entire cities are infatuated with these teams and as a result, people spend much of their time and money watching and rooting, hoping for a victory. There is nothing wrong with enjoying and marveling at the talent of these professional athletes, but what happens with all these resources that go into the sports? They go straight to the players. Although our society idolizes and cheers on our favorite athletes, they are significantly overpaid. The amount of money some of the best athletes make in a year is astonishing.

Professional baseball player, Alex Rodriguez, will have made 33 million dollars this year, just based on his salary, not including endorsements (Freedman). Tiger Woods made almost 23 million dollars in his winnings from various golf tournaments in 2009, and add on another 105 million from his endorsements and you get the highest paid athlete in the world (Freeman). Endorsements are another subject entirely, but it makes you understand how important it is for companies to have their logo on someone's hat, or have a big star in their commercial.

Keep in mind not all athletes are paid in millions, we are talking about some of the best in the most popular sports. That being said, the average MLB player's contract will be around three million dollars, and the minimum being 400 thousand dollars (MLBPA). This means a player sitting on the bench the entire season will make nearly ten times what the average teacher will make. The reason all of these players get paid so much is because all professional sports leagues are essentially a business. And with all these countless numbers of sport fans (myself included), business is booming.

It is important to understand how the business works when you need to fix a problem. The Managers and Owners want their team to do well to bring in the fans, which in turn brings in the money. If a team is doing well they will make exponentially more money because of the sellout crowds and the jersey's flying off the shelves. The best way to improve your team is to get the best players, and that is done by paying for them. When a player is a free agent (does not have a contract to a specific team), teams will essentially bid and negotiate, and in most cases the highest paying team will get that player.

This is why teams like the Yankees have so many of the best players, because of their humungous fan base, they have a seemingly unlimited amount of cash to bring in the best players. So all this money is coming in from tickets and clothing and other sources of income and it has to go somewhere, right? Many people think athletes are rightfully paid all the money they have earned. Some argue that football players have short careers and many health problems after they are retired, so they will then need money for their injuries.

With the average NFL player making 310 Thousand dollars in a year (NFL Player...), and they play 10 years for example, they should be okay financially. Some young athletes will receive their first big check and go blow it all immediately. This is why some players are broke years after their career, and try to use it to justify their pay check, and make it seem as if they aren't paid that much at all. In reality it is their poor money managing skills; they still make a ridiculously larger amount of money in their career than any normal person will make in their lifetime.

Another argument is that not all athletes are paid so highly. This is true, a professional volleyball player, or even a minor league baseball player, will probably not make as much as a A-Rod or Tiger, but they are making a living by having fun playing a sport. What more could you ask for? When you take a look at an athlete's salary and compare it to a teacher, fireman, or even a doctor, it doesn't even come close. There are so many other occupations that are paid much less than a pro athlete, but contribute much more to our community.

Teachers are having to have more and more students in their classes and many of them are having to find a new career because of the pay. A good teacher can change the lives of some students and provide so much knowledge, but it is hard to aspire to be a teacher rather than an athlete when you compare the two's salary. Think of all the money we could put into education, health, the environment, just to name a few. Just being able to live by playing a sport is something players shouldn't take for granted.

It is the very fans of the sports who are responsible for such high salaries (Callahan). The main way to lower professional athletes' salaries would be for people to stop paying so much for tickets, jerseys, and sports packages on television. Frankly, that will not be happening anytime soon with the current way we worship these people. What needs to happen is the big professional sports leagues (NBA, MLB, NFL, NHL), need to recognize what is going on. They need to see how our economy is hurt and how our society needs the financial support.

Ticket prices need to be slashed. Jersey prices need to be slashed. The best athletes can still be rewarded and paid a few hundred thousand, not millions

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and millions. They can still make great money from endorsements. And those extra funds need to be given back to the cities that have given so much to the sports franchises. The people need them to rebuild our educational and health systems, and our overall economy. Players can still have a great standard of living, but it is just wasted money if they are sitting among America's richest.

Many of these arguments can also be said for corporate CEO's and that needs to change. These people are at the top of the food chain while everyone below them is hurting. The sports leagues are blinded by greed and stardom; not only is it the athletes being paid so much, but the team owners as well. It is okay to look at these pro's as a personal hero, but we need to step back and cut down on how much we idolize them if we want to see improvement. In the end, it is all a business and it is their job to step up and make a change to better our society.