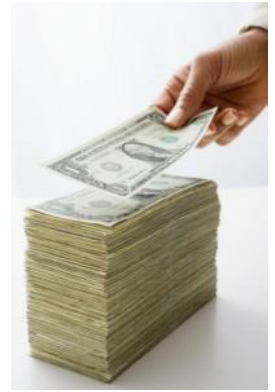


# **PRO ARTICLE: Professional Athletes Deserve Their Pay**

By: Jamal E.M. Cummins

In today's society, the high salaries of professional athletes' are on the front page of every mass media stream from USA TODAY to Facebook. Year after year their salaries continue to rise to astronomical numbers with no end in sight. The average American will never see in that kind of money in their lifetime and with the recent economic recession, they are not too excited about the salaries of athletes. There is a perception towards athletes that they are greedy people whose only concern is for the fastest cars, designer clothing, and liberal spending but this is not true for all athletes. There is a phrase in sports, "In college, they play for the name on the front but at the pro-level, they play for the name on the back." This means that the athlete has lost the true love of the game. Most people argue that athletes do not deserve the excessive sum of money they are paid while others feel that they do deserve that their high salaries.



Sports superstars are worth their high salaries. There are many factors that we must consider before making rash generalizations concerning these athletes. One factor is the time they spend practicing. Professional athletes spend time in various environments such as gyms, football fields, baseball fields and the like. With the duration of the average sports season lasting between four and seven months, athletes practice nearly every day to include the offseason. To begin with, there is an old saying, "Time is money". To people, life is priceless for it is something money does not bring. Moreover, a person's time is not very long, especially for famous athletes. Not only is a lot of their time spent practicing, they also have to make time for interviews with the media, which by the way are not fun especially when they are asked tough questions. Additionally, professional athletes consistently sacrifice their time away from family to travel spending many nights in hotels away from family.

Another factor to consider is the risk of injury. Professional athletes are paid to give audiences excitement, but sometimes this excitement comes at a price. Whether it is getting the touchdown in football or diving for the ball in baseball, athletes often times put their bodies on the line for the game. The problem with this is that they usually keep playing while they are hurt by taking pain medicines that are provided by the teams to numb the pain. This helps them when they are playing the game but once they retire, many athletes cannot afford to buy high priced medicines to offset the pain anymore. This leads to players either filing for bankruptcy or having to start a new career to cover the cost. There are some things that money cannot buy and that includes the health of these athletes. Although some athletes receive surgery to fix injuries, they could never replace the original body they had before. Thus, a great deal more money is what they are deserved.

Additionally, athletes shoulder more responsibility than common people and they have to sacrifice their privacy. As a professional athlete, you are constantly being watched by the media and society. Thousands of teenagers idolize famous athletes and because of this, they are required be perfect models for these young people by using their excellent performances. They have to mind their behaviors in public places and in their private times. Everything that they do will be exposed in public. For example, when an athlete parties too much, he will be condemned as irresponsible. Thus, they are living under the pressure from every walk of the society. They basically have to give up their privacy in exchange for fame and money. They cannot go to shopping without disguise, and they are deprived of the right of living a normal life like everybody else.

Anna Maria Lusardi, an economist at George Washington University, who advocates financial education, says that athletes are the ideal students for financial management courses. Professional athletes will continue to get the paid their high salaries as long as the fans keep coming to the games or watching sports at home. The sports industry is a billion dollar business in which players only receive a fraction the profits that owners and network conglomerates earn.

That's why over 100 million viewers tuned in to the Super Bowl last year. To watch a battle between two teams who possess excellence, to challenge each other to heights that they could never reach without the power of competition and opposition. To see the finest athletes challenged. To see them rise or fail to rise. To learn lessons about teamwork and personal accomplishment.

That is why America loves sport. That is why they earn millions. Not because of the game they play. But because they have risen. Because they are here to compete. They risk it all in the face of failure and frustration. They do not sit on sidelines. They participate. Like we are challenged to do in a place where we are free to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

# **CON ARTICLE: Are Professional Athletes Overpaid?**

MIHIR BHAGAT MARCH 21, 2010

Wouldn't it be great to make nearly \$111 million a year simply to play a game? Tiger Woods, along with many other professional athletes, certainly think so. But do these athletes really deserve all that money?

Absolutely not. Professional athletes are making too much money in a society where salaries and wages are traditionally based on the value of one's work. In today's society, one should be paid according to the job's economic importance and their value to society.

Teaching is one of the most economically important occupations because our future economy relies on the education of its youth, yet teachers are paid astronomically less than the average professional athlete is. In fact, each basket Kobe Bryant scores earns him equivalent to the average classroom teacher's yearly salary. However, some may argue that while teachers only provide service to a single classroom, superstar athletes are entertaining fans all around the world, enticing people with a feeling of relaxation and excitement.

Obviously, what these individuals must not be aware of is the most important man in our nation, the president, who makes critical decisions that affect the entire world every day, only makes \$400,000 a year. While President Obama is hard at work reviving the economy, the unproven rookie in the MLB is earning way over that figure. Furthermore, police officers, firefighters, and doctors save lives while risking their own for a fraction of what sports stars make. People in the military leave their families at home to defend and protect the country knowing they may never return. It's truly a pity that none of these true heroes are given the same recognition by society as athletes such as Brett Favre or Michael Jordan are given.

While I do understand that making it into the pros is not an easy thing to do, and that it takes a tremendous number of hours of hard work and dedication every day to earn a job in professional sports, these people do nothing more than entertain the general public.

Moreover, in my mind, if these athletes want to continue to be rewarded with the fame and fortune that is unfairly bestowed upon them, they must prove to the world that they are going to be positive role models for future athletes, and those who admire them. These infamous players must grow up, and prove to America that they can be positive role models for kids on and off the field. They may get leeway when it comes to their salaries, but the law should be overpowered by any amount of talent. If Alex Rodriguez earns the same amount of money as it would take to feed the nation's poor for a year, he can't cheat and take steroids. What kids learn from successful ballplayers like him is that "It's okay for me to use illegal substances, because in the long run, it will pay off by earning me an enormous contract." In order for these players to gain respect, they need to have a more significant impact on the community.

Finally, what puzzles me is how athletes say that millions of dollars aren't enough--they need more. What puzzles me even more, is how after holding out for weeks or even months, the owners give in and pay them.

Think about Jamarcus Russel, the former No. 1 overall pick in the '07 draft. He is on a six-year \$68 million contract, with \$31 million guaranteed. In simpler terms, that means that despite currently being recognized as one of the biggest busts of all time, and even if he were to get injured tomorrow and never play again, he will still have \$31 million in the bank. In any other job, if you don't perform to your expectations, you're fired. There is no guaranteed money.

The whole system that allows professional athletes to just swim around in money is simply ridiculous, and it needs to stop. When asking people whether they think athletes are paid way too much money, most agree with me. Do you?

CHICAGO PRO ATHLETE AVERAGE SALARIES	ABOVE-AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SALARIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The average Bears player made about 2 million dollars in 2011</li> <li>*The average Cubs player will make over 6 million dollars in 2012</li> <li>*The average Bulls player will make just under 5 million dollars in 2012</li> <li>*The average Blackhawks player will make just over 2.7 million dollars in 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The highest-paid type of <a href="#">doctor averages</a> \$500,000 per year</li> <li>*A <a href="#">GS-13 level astronaut</a> (The highest level from NASA) makes roughly \$107,000 per year</li> <li>*A <a href="#">Lawyer</a> with 11+ years of experience makes up to \$170,000 per year, plus perks</li> <li>*An <a href="#">above-average car salesman</a> can make up to \$70,000 per year, plus bonus</li> <li>*The <a href="#">median household income</a> in the US is right around \$54,000 per year, depending on level of education complete</li> </ul>