Are Professional Athletes Making Too Much Money?

There has always been a debate on whether or not professional athletes are being paid too much money. The question is however, what exactly is considered being overpaid? True, some athletes make tens of millions of dollars, but many of them do not. Making it to the professional level, however, is the hardest part for these athletes. When it comes to playing professional basketball, only .03% of all college basketball players play professionally in the NBA. This means that the other athletes that are playing professionally are being employed in a different field. Now, what exactly classifies someone as a professional athlete? A professional athlete is someone who is being paid to play sports. They play for profit-making teams and also in individual sports where they might compete in tournaments to earn their money.

One of the biggest debates about professional athletes is whether or not they should be given contracts for $15 or $20 million dollars for a single season. Is this considered overpaid? Some may think so, but one must think about how much money these players are making for their teams. The world of sports is a business and these players are the reasons why the businesses are doing as well as they are. People pay to come out to watch these athletes perform on a nightly basis. People go out and buy the merchandise of the athletes. Television companies also pay to have the teams play on their network. This, in turn, allows companies to pay for ad space. This means more money for the networks and more money for the teams.
My personal opinion on this particular matter is a bit biased. I am going into the field of sports and have hopes of one day becoming a sports agent. So it would be hypocritical for me to say that I believe professional athletes are overpaid. I want athletes to make the most they can because the more money they make, the more money the agents make. Also, I understand the impact that these athletes have with their teams and leagues. Since football, basketball, and baseball are high profile sports, it is natural that those athletes are being paid the most.

When people think about professional athletes and how much they are being paid, they forget about the other types of athletes that are not making millions of dollars. According to data from salary.com the average salary for a professional athlete ranges from $18,100 to $40,800 per year. This range includes all of the professional athletes, such as the top tier players and the bottom tier players. The minimum salary for a player in the NBA starts at $442,000. The minimum salary for a player in the WNBA is $34,500 and the top players in the league make around $50,000. In the MLB the minimum salary for a player is $400,000, while in the MLS the minimum salary is only $20,100. This shows that the amount the athlete is paid depends on the league and sport played. It all depends on that particular sport’s financial structure. For example, the MLB has a much larger financial structure than the NBA. In 2011, the MLB had 12 teams with a payroll greater than $100 million and one team that hit the $200 million mark. No team in the NBA has a payroll greater than $95 million. Also, there were just 12 teams in the NBA that actually made a profit last year, compared to 27 teams that made a profit last year in the MLB.
One thing people question about professional athletes is whether it is right for them to be paid the amounts that they are. As I stated before, however, what is considered being overpaid? People always talk about how athletes are receiving too much money, but they are not the only ones receiving that kind of money. The CEO of Oracle, according to an article on bleacherreport.com, makes about $192 million a year. Surgeons make between $200,000 and $430,000 a year. According to a 2007 article on CNN, professional athletes do not even make it into the top 50 paying jobs in the United States. They could be, however, performing one of the most risky jobs in the United States.

Professional athletes run the risk of injury every time they step onto the court or field. They risk ending their careers in one play almost every night. Players fracture and break ankles, tear ACLs, break legs, and some even suffer lifelong problems as a result of playing. Is this a perfect example of risk and reward? Some people may think so. Professional football players take hits to the head every single day and that is why some of them end up having serious problems once they are retired. If some of these players had not made millions of dollars playing professional football, who would pay for their medical bills when they need it? These professional athletes sacrifice their bodies night in and night out for entertaining fans. If you ask me, you cannot put a price tag on health. These athletes go through so much not only during their careers, but after their careers as well. Countless professional athletes have many problems once their careers have ended. Ex-professional basketball player Bill Walton has had numerous surgeries since his career ended. Walton is not alone in this; many other players have had numerous surgeries as well.
Professional athletes not only run the risk of being seriously injured, but they also risk quality time with their families. Some people say that athletes only work during their particular season. This is not an accurate statement. Many people believe that during the offseason professional athletes go out and party and spend their millions of dollars. In actuality, this is far from the truth. A professional athlete cannot afford to waste time during the offseason. These athletes have to stay in shape, which requires hours and hours of dedication daily, even if this means they have to miss out on spending time with their families, miss out on special events with their children, etc. They must spend much time staying in shape. If a player reports to training camp out of shape, he is risking losing his job. In professional sports, teams will not wait around for a player to get back into shape. They will simply cut the player and go out and find someone to replace him. Therefore, it is extremely important for professional athletes to stay in shape so that they can retain their jobs and receive a paycheck.

When it comes down to it, being a professional athlete is a job. It is just like being a nurse, a waitress, or a teacher. Do not let the top athletes in the world fool you into thinking all professional athletes are making millions of dollars. There are professional athletes who work just as hard as anyone else and are still paid very low amounts. For example, a minor league baseball player only makes around $1,100 a month. Multiply that by 12 months and that only comes out to about $13,000 a year. This is less than the amount that a fast food cook makes in a year. However, in minor league baseball, the athletes are paid only for the time they spend playing with the team and not for the entire year. So in reality, minor league baseball players, assuming that they do not have another job, will only make about $5,500 a year. The point here
is that when people use the term professional athlete with regard to being overpaid, they must keep in mind that minor league athletes are included in that group.

In conclusion, I feel that some professional athletes are being overpaid. People use the term professional athlete very loosely. When making an argument that professional athletes are overpaid, people must keep in mind that this includes all types of athletes. Not every professional athlete makes money like Kobe Bryant or Alex Rodriguez. Some professional athletes are hard working individuals that barely make ends meet. I agree that it is unreasonable for one single athlete to sign a contract for $30 million. However, one must think about how much money that player, in particular, generates for his team. That player will bring in fans to watch the games and see that player perform and will also convince people to spend money on that player’s merchandise, as well as the team’s merchandise. At the end of the day this is going to be a topic that will always be debated by people. All I am asking is that those people take a look at the big picture, and that is that not all professional athletes make millions. There are still those athletes that work just as hard yet still struggle to pay the bills.
Work Cited
