

SHOULD ALL ATHLETES ON A TEAM EARN THE SAME?

Think about your favorite Cincinnati sports team, like the Bengals, Reds, or FC Cincinnati. Every player helps the team, from the star quarterback to the player who sits on the bench. But those players can earn very different amounts of money. Joe Burrow, the Bengals' starting quarterback, earns around \$55 million a year, while a brand-new player on the same team might earn just \$795,000. Some people think star players deserve more money. Others think it is not fair for teammates to earn such different amounts. So what do you think? Should all players on a team earn the same?

NO, PAY SHOULD BE DIFFERENT

Some players work their whole lives to become stars, and their pay should reflect that effort. Your favorite players bring fans to the stadium, sell jerseys, and appear on TV, which brings in more money for the whole team. In most jobs, people who do more and help their team do well tend to earn more pay, and sports work the same way. Pro sports careers can also be very short. Many players have to stop playing in their 20's or 30's because of injuries, so they need to earn as much as they can while they still can.

YES, BIG PAY GAPS ARE UNFAIR

Winning takes the whole team, not just one star. Coaches, backup players, and support staff all help, even if they never make the highlight reel. When one player earns 50 or 60 times more than a teammate, it can cause hurt feelings and make it harder for the team to work well together. Sometimes a player earns more money just because they are famous, not because they are the best. And when rich teams can simply pay more for the best players, it makes the sport less fair for everyone else.

What's the gap?

The top player in each sports league earns this many times more than the lowest-paid player on their team in 2026.



In the NFL (football)...

x77

Top: Dak Prescott \$60M

In the NBA (basketball)...

x48

Top: S. Curry \$55.8M



In the MLB (baseball)...

x82

Top: Juan Soto \$62.3M



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