



## Highest-Paid Athletes in the World (and the products they endorse)

*The Forbes official list of the highest-paid athletes is upon us. And this year, we've got a list full of huge paydays for athletes both on and off the playing field.*



### 1. Lionel Messi – US\$130 Million

The world's highest-paid athlete for 2022 is Lionel Messi who brought home a staggering \$130 Million USD in the calendar year. This also marks the first time the athlete has pegged level with Cristiano Ronaldo for off-field earnings (\$55 Million) thanks to endorsements that extend beyond his usual Adidas, Budweiser and PepsiCo. deals. The football star became the face of Hard Rock International in June last year, bringing him over the top.

**Age:** 34

**Sport:** Soccer

**Nationality:** Argentina

**Sponsorships:** Adidas (Lifetime), Budweiser, PepsiCo, Clothing line (Ginny Hilfiger).

**2021 earnings:** US\$130 million



### 2. LeBron James – US\$121.2 Million

2021 was a hallmark year from King James that was backed by an NBA-record payday, and while his Los Angeles Lakers struggled on the court number 23 isn't slowing down in the money department. LeBron turned his fortunes around off the court, doubling his on-court earnings with an \$80 Million duffel bag of cash. While 2021 meant debuting as Hollywood's leading man with the release of *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, 2022 meant cashing in on that investment when he sold a minority stake in SpringHill Entertainment for around \$725 million. He now has an estimated net worth of \$850 Million, *according to Forbes*.

**Age:** 37

**Sport:** Basketball

**Nationality:** United States

**Sponsorships:** PepsiCo, Fenway Sports Group (Red Sox, Liverpool FC and Roush Fenway Racing).

**2021 earnings:** US\$96.5 million



### 3. Cristiano Ronaldo – US\$115 Million

Christiano Ronaldo made history when he became the first person to reach a combined 500 million followers across his social accounts in 2021. In 2022, he holds a whopping 690 million followers, and this gives him an infinite amount of leverage for Ronaldo in brand partnerships, none is more evident than in his off-field earnings which eclipse \$55 million.

**Age:** 37

**Sport:** Soccer

**Nationality:** Portugal

**Sponsorships:** Nike (Lifetime), CR7 business of branded clothing, accessories, hotels and gyms.

**2021 earnings:** US\$120 million



### 4. Neymar – US\$95 Million

After announcing the early exit of his contract with Nike’s Jordan Brand, he inked a massive contract with Puma in 2021 and the bag hasn’t stopped coming in. In 2022, Neymar kept his estimated earnings on track thanks to new Netflix docuseries, *Neymar: The Perfect Chaos*. NFTs are also on the books for the football star with an NFTSTAR partnership alongside a few million-dollar

bored apes.

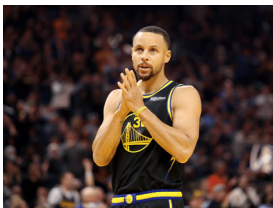
**Age:** 30

**Sport:** Soccer

**Nationality:** Brazil

**Sponsorships:** Puma, Fortnite, NFTs.

**2021 earnings:** US\$95 million



### 5. Steph Curry – US\$92.8 Million

While he didn’t make the cut in 2021, expect Steph Curry to hang around on this list for a few more years as he reaps the benefits of his four-year, \$215 million extension deal he signed last August. Where will he stand in the final year of the contract when he’s set to make almost \$60 Million? Who knows, but if the external investments in FTX metaverse and Unanimous Media (Comcast NBCUniversal) pay off, expect it to be firmly at the top.

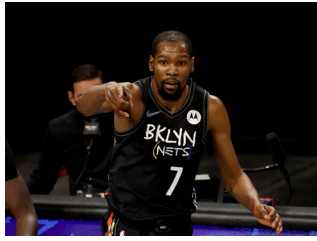
**Age:** 34

**Sport:** Basketball

**Nationality:** United States

**Sponsorships:** Under Armour, Comcast NBCUniversal, FTX metaverse.

## 6. Kevin Durant – US\$92.1 Million



After suffering an Achilles injury that put him on the bench for the 2019-2020 season, Brooklyn Nets star Kevin Durant bounced back in the only way he knows how – *securing a big bag*. And while the Nets' playoff aspirations fell flat in 2021-2022, his off-court earnings provided a cushion to the tune of \$50 Million. His latest investment opportunities include NFT platform OpenSea, Coinbase, Weedmaps, and NBA Top Shot.

**Age:** 33

**Sport:** Basketball

**Nationality:** United States

**Sponsorships:** Thirty-Five Ventures, Two Distant Strangers, Uber, OpenSea, Weedmaps.

**2021 earnings:** US\$75 million

## 7. Roger Federer – US\$90.7 Million



No athlete made more money off the court than Rodger Federer this year. The tennis star aced his way to a staggering sum of \$90 Million off the court, with deals coming left, right, and centre, the biggest of which include; Uniqlo and Rolex. His early investment into On running (2019) paid off when the brand went public in September and raised a gargantuan \$600 Million.

**Age:** 40

**Sport:** Tennis

**Nationality:** Switzerland

**Sponsorships:** On, Rolex, and Uniqlo.

**2021 earnings:** US\$90 million

## 8. Canelo Alvarez – US\$90 Million



The result of two boxing matches in the calendar year that netted Alvarez more than \$40 Million each lands him on the list of the highest-paid athletes in 2022. Deals with Hennessy and Canelo Productions aim to bring boxing matches to Mexico with Matchroom Boxing and DAZN, *according to Forbes*.

**Age:** 31

**Sport:** Boxing

**Nationality:** Mexico

**Sponsorships:** Hennessy, Taco restaurants, Canelo Promotions.

## 9. Tom Brady – US\$83.9 Million



Capping off an unbelievable season with a Lombardi trophy to boot in 2021, the now 44-year-old doesn't look to be stopping anytime soon after coming out of retirement after just six weeks. According to Forbes, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback added endorsement deals with eyewear maker Christopher Cloos and apparel juggernaut Fanatics to his wealth in 2021, and for 2022 the quarterback has a MASSIVE \$540 Million deal lined up with Fox.

**Age:** 44

**Sport:** Football

**Nationality:** United States

**Sponsorships:** Christopher Cloos, Fanatics, TB12, film production company, NFT platform.

**2021 earnings:** US\$76 million

## 10. Giannis Antetokounmpo – US\$80.9 Million



The only member of the highest-paid athletes in the world for 2022 that lands under 30, Giannis Antetokounmpo signed a five-year, \$228 million contract in December 2020 so expect him to stay on the list for a long time coming. Other endorsements off the court with Whatsapp, Google, and a soon to be released biopic titled *Rise* on Disney+ will surely keep him on the list for the decade.

**Age:** 27

**Sport:** Basketball

**Nationality:** Greece

**Sponsorships:** Nike, NFTSTAR, Whatsapp, Google Pixel 6.

**Source:** <https://manofmany.com/entertainment/sport/highest-paid-athletes-2022>