

GLOBAL SPORTS SALARIES SURVEY 2017

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, TEAM-BY-TEAM,
IN THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR SPORTS LEAGUES

465 TEAMS
29 LEAGUES
16 COUNTRIES
9 SPORTS
9,816 SPORTSMEN
(AND 2,428 SPORTSWOMEN)
\$20.58 BILLION IN WAGES
1 AIM

**THE GENDER
(IN)EQUALITY ISSUE**

sportingintelligence



“The average pay across all NBA players in the current season is £5,497,859.”

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma is a mid-ranked American state in size and population, located in south central USA and home to four million people. It's famous for its Great Plains, extreme weather and museums dedicated to cowboy and Western heritage, and to Route 66.

Well known Oklahomans include actors Brad Pitt and Olivia Munn, New York Yankees legend Mickey Mantle, Senator Elizabeth Warren, novelist Ralph Ellison, pioneering astronaut Shannon Lucid and filmmaker Ron Howard.

And as of Autumn 2017, Oklahoma is home to the best paid sports team the world has ever known: the Oklahoma City Thunder of basketball's NBA. This is the eighth edition of Sportingintelligence's Global Sports Salaries Survey and uniquely we measure 'first-team pay' to assess the earnings of athletes in widely different sports and leagues around the world. In simple terms, we add up the salaries of all the players on each team and divide them by the number of players to provide an average figure per team.

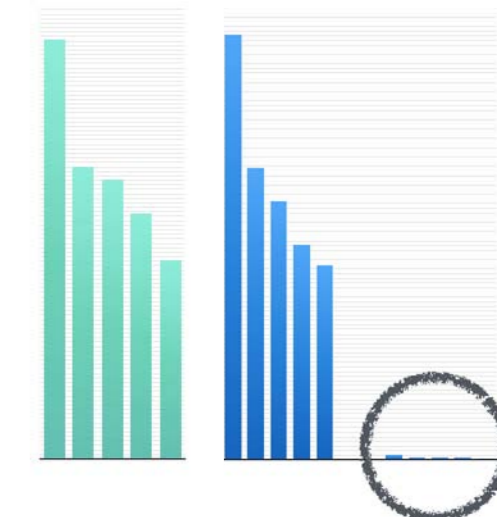
Baseball is one sport that has had a team featured in the top spot, and football (soccer) another, several times. Basketball hit No1 for the first time last year when the Cleveland Cavaliers were the best paid in the world. But this year it's 'The Thunder',

with average on-court earnings of £7,150,388 per man for the current season, or \$9,295,504. That doesn't include endorsements or sponsorship deals or bonuses. There's more detail about The Thunder and how they claimed this record later in this report, but the 2017 GSSS is a special edition that takes another set of basketball players - from the best women's league in the world, the WNBA - and puts them centre stage along with thousands of other sportswomen.

We have undertaken a global audit of how women's professional team sports compare to men's in wage terms. How many fully professional men's leagues are there? Hundreds. How many women's? Hardly any. How many professional sportsmen are there in the world, who earn a living wage at least from their sport? Hundreds of thousands, at least. How many sportswomen? The honest answer is nobody knows, but it's one of the questions we explore in these pages and it's a tiny fraction of the men's figure.

What is the difference between how much the men earn and how much the women earn? And does it matter? And if it does, then who is doing what to change it? We hope to provide some answers, or at least robust new figures to contribute to the debate.

First, a small illustration of the general landscape. The green graph on the left below charts the average earnings in the world's five best paid women's sports leagues. Now look on the right and the same five leagues are circled - alongside the five best paid men's leagues in the world on the same scale.



The best paid women's league is the WNBA, and we have obtained the official salary figures for the 2017 season, when average pay was £57,507 for the year (or \$74,759). That is what the bar on the far left of the women's graph represents. That is the gold standard in elite women's team sport, worldwide.

The best paid sports league in the world, by average salary, is the NBA, the men's equivalent of the WNBA. The average pay across all NBA players in the current season is £5,497,859 (or \$7,147,217). The men of the NBA earn 96 times as much as the women of the

WNBA, or £105,728 each week, or roughly twice as much as an WNBA player will earn in a year.

IN an attempt to gain some insight into the scale of professionalism in women's sport against men's, we looked to football, the truly global game. Every country plays it. It is the national sport in many countries. It is simple, accessible, cheap and immensely popular. The quadrennial football World Cups are, by a long way, the biggest single-sport events on the planet by almost whatever metric you choose, from global audience to related revenue. For all those reasons, football should be ideal territory to measure equality, or rather inequality, in numbers playing it, and making a living from it. There should be no inherent barriers, theoretically, that prevent women doing what their male counterparts do.

So how many male professional players are there in the world? And how many women? It seems a simple question but no one organisation can tell you, accurately. Not the world governing body, FIFA, nor regional bodies like UEFA. Not the international football players' union, FIFPro, nor even individual football associations in each country, many of whom don't compile such data.

Sporting Intelligence's 'audit' instead reviewed all the available sources, and added fresh research. Cutting to the chase, our best estimates are there are:

137,021 male professional footballers in the world.
1,287 female professional footballers in the world.

Or in other words, 106 times as many men as women.
Or to put it another way, 0.93 per cent of the world's professional footballers are women.

These numbers need caveats, heaps of them, and some of those come below. Perhaps the biggest caveat is that if you include 'semi-professional' players for the men, namely those who earn a portion of their income but not much of it from football, the 137,021 will multiply. Whereas those 1,287 women already include a number of players who would more reasonably be described as semi-professional. Some women players do well financially, certainly. Many manage to get by. The salient point is the gender equality gap in football might be bigger than the 106 to 1 headline suggests. This makes professional sport, with football as a proxy for sport in this context, more gender unequal than many parts of society we often consider to be male-dominated, from politics to big business.

We can demonstrate this using data from countries where sports teams that feature in this report come from. In Sweden, 44 per cent of members of parliament are women, and it's 42 per cent in Mexico, 39 per cent in Spain, 37 per cent in Germany, 32 per cent in the United Kingdom and Australia, 26 per cent in Canada, 19 per cent in the USA (House of Representatives) and nine per cent in Japan (ditto, as of the October 2017 Japanese election). In global academia, 36 of the world's top 200 universities are led by women (18 per cent). In medicine, 26 per cent of Canada's surgeons are women,

with a figure of 18 per cent in the USA, 11 per cent in the UK and nine per cent in Australia.

Some of these numbers remain a distance from gender parity, but wherever you look - in commerce, among the clergy, in outer space - women make up a larger share of the professionals than in football, and sport.

As 'many' as 4.5 per cent of directors at Nikkei 225 companies in Japan are women, in an environment traditionally hostile to them. At Australian ASX200 firms, 11 CEOs are women, or 5.5 per cent. At Fortune 500 companies in the USA, 6 per cent of CEOs are women, and at FTSE 100 companies in the UK, the figure is 7 per cent.

“4.5 per cent of directors at Nikkei 225 companies in Japan are women”

None of which is laudable but it makes 1 per cent of professional footballers look more pitiful still.

One in 10 churches in the USA has a woman as the senior pastor, or 10 per cent. Of the 299 people ordained to stipendiary ministry by the Church of England in 2016, 118 of them, or 39 per cent, were women.

Even space is no longer the final frontier: according to official figures from NASA, 59 different women including cosmonauts, astronauts and payload specialists had flown in space by July 2017, of 550 people altogether. That's 11 per cent.

“Space is no longer the final frontier. Gender equality in sport is. Female astronauts are almost 12 times more prevalent in their industry than professional female footballers.”



“The average salary now in the top (men’s) football competition in England, the Premier League, is £2.64m a year, or 99 times as much as the average salary in the top women’s football competition...”



THE one per cent of women professional footballers is worth closer examination and in the deep-dive section into a dozen women’s leagues, we will explore what it means to be professional in the most established leagues. The size of the gender gap has never been satisfactorily established, to date, with hard data.

FIFA performed a major piece of work in their 2006 global ‘Big Count’ of footballers at all levels, when they said 265 million people played the game, and 38 million were registered, and reckoned there to be

113,000 (overwhelmingly male) professional players.

FIFPro, the worldwide representative body for professional footballers, say they have 65,000 members and ‘about 900’ of them are women, although FIFPro work actively with player unions in ‘only’ 70 of the world’s 211 football nations. The Football Observatory is a respected research group within the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES), an independent body located in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Their most recent forensic count of professional players looked principally at

first-team squads, and mainly in top divisions, in 90 countries and logged almost 55,000 individual professional male players. Our audit drew on all those sources, checked and updated them, added countries and leagues ‘missing’, spoke to local experts, including FAs, and arrived at our 137,021 professional male players, 43 per cent of whom play within Europe (the UEFA region), 20 per cent in South America, 14 per cent in Africa, 13 per cent in Asia and the balance in North and Central America and Australasia.

Counting the women’s professional players accurately is trickier still, starting with the definition of ‘professional’ and what that means. UEFA recently published a report called ‘Women’s football across the national associations 2017’. It is a commendable piece of work and worth a look and you can get a copy at UEFA’s website here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ybnrb7pv>

That too makes an attempt to ‘count’ women’s football in various ways, nation by nation, including the number of registered teams and the number of professional players. Their specific definition of ‘professional player’ is thus: ‘A player who has a contract with a club that is affiliated to the national association via a league or a regional association. She is paid for her footballing activities, and that payment covers all of her financial needs. Her last registration date was no more than 12 months ago.’

UEFA clearly relies on 55+ reporting bodies (associations and in turn their own leagues and clubs) to provide the information collated for the report, and

herein lies a problem. One person’s view of ‘professional’ is clearly different from another’s, as is the interpretation even of the ‘professional’ definition. The report cites Turkey, for example, as having 316 professional women footballers, in a country where the women’s 10-team top division has some clubs that are in effect amateur, some expenses aside. And it says that Germany, home to the Frauen-Bundesliga, the second best-paid women’s league in the world and home to European giants such as Wolfsburg, as having no professional footballers at all. Something is clearly amiss. This is not UEFA’s fault but an issue of definition and reporting. We will examine the make-up of some women’s football leagues and their pay structures later in this report, where it becomes clearer that even the ‘best’ women’s leagues have lots of low paid or even unpaid players.

The number of professional women players we estimate worldwide at 1,287 is, inevitably, only a best attempt rather than ‘right’. It is the sum of what we know to be full-time players in ‘professional’ leagues plus centrally contracted international players across ‘major’ nations. And we believe it is probably closer to the number of what is more widely perceived as ‘professional’ than the 1,790 that UEFA cite in Europe alone in 2017, including those 316 in Turkey. More and better research is required, and as one insider at FIFA confided: ‘The pro, semi-pro and amateur definition is quite a grey area for leagues and for players ... Unification of the definitions and proper follow-up will be needed to allow us to start making proper conclusions on the subject.’

WHAT is not in doubt is that male professional sportsmen, especially but not only in team sports, outnumber professional sportswomen by a high factor, and demonstrably by about a 100 to 1 in football.

“NBA pays 96 times the WNBA.”

It is also the case that wage differentials can be massive between those women who do make it to elite levels and their male counterparts. We know the NBA pays 96 times the WNBA. As this edition of the GSSS calculates, the average salary now in the top (men’s) football competition in England, the Premier League, is £2.64m a year, or 99 times as much as the average salary in the top women’s football competition in England, the FA Women’s Super League, where we reveal it is £26,752 this season.

This report details the salaries paid in a dozen women’s sports leagues, seven of them top-division football competitions, in France, Germany, England, the USA, Sweden, Australia and Mexico. Those seven leagues comprise 81 teams and 1,693 players in their current or most recently completed seasons, earning club salaries of £32.8m a year, combined.

That is almost identical to the €36.8m (£32.9m) that Brazilian forward Neymar will earn at Paris Saint-Germain, by himself, in 2017-18, for his playing contract alone.

Of course we can sketch easy - true - explanations for these great disparities. Men’s professional

sport is well established, often attracting big paying crowds and more importantly huge TV revenues. Sponsors flock in with more money. This just doesn’t happen in most women’s professional sport, especially team sport. So far, so obvious.

The next part is working out whether that matters, and how it might change. There seems to be an appetite for change, a desire to debate the issues, and evolution is gathering pace. One guest article in this report is by Katie Brazier, the head of women’s competition at the English FA, making the case why her federation has decided to radically restructure the English women’s league (again) to make it fully professional. That won’t happen without opposition.

Another piece from Shaun Martyn of Fair Break, from his dual perspective of campaigner and promoter, examines hurdles faced when trying to create opportunities for women to make money from sport as vested interests pursue divergent and disruptive agendas.

A third piece, from Jaimie Fuller, head of sportswear firm SKINS, a partner of Sporting Intelligence, launches a new initiative that draws attention to a small football club that has started paying their men’s and women’s teams the same - just because they think it’s right.

Meaningful change at high levels won’t be quick. But extraordinary things happen in the most unlikely places. Just ask The Thunder.

CONTENTS

- 10** THE GENDER (IN)EQUALITY ISSUE, INTRODUCTION
- 12-13** GUEST ESSAY, KATIE BRAZIER, THE FA
- 14-15** GUEST ESSAY, SHAUN MARTYN, FAIR BREAK AND WICL
- 16-17** GUEST EDITORIAL ON EQUALITY FC, JAIMIE FULLER, SKINS
- 20-47** LEAGUE-BY-LEAGUE ANALYSIS OF 12 LEADING WOMEN'S SPORTS LEAGUES
- 50-51** NORTH AMERICA'S LEADING SPORTS CITIES BY TOP TEAMS, WNBA INCLUDED
- 53-57** GSSS 2017: OKLAHOMA RISE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD
- 58-65** THE WORLD'S BEST PAID SPORTS TEAM, FULL LIST
- 66-139** LEAGUE-BY-LEAGUE ANALYSIS OF 18 LEADING LEAGUES, WNBA INCLUDED
- 140** ABOUT SPORTINGINTELLIGENCE

THE GENDER (IN)EQUALITY ISSUE

The best paid 12 men's sports leagues in this report comprise 7,265 players at 257 clubs in six sports across 10 countries on three continents. These include athletes from the 'big four' leagues of North America in basketball, baseball, ice hockey and American football; from the 'big five' divisions of European football in England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France; from cricket in the IPL in India, from football in the CSL in China and from baseball in the NPB in Japan. Collectively they earn £15.7 billion (\$20.4bn) at an average of £2.16m (\$2.8m) each, per year.

In the introduction we noted how the (male) basketball players in the NBA earn almost 100 times what their female counterparts earn in WNBA and how average earnings in England's top football division, the Premier League, are about 100 times those in the top women's division in England, the FA Women's Super League. That massive disparity prevails more widely across elite team sport.

Our table below shows the results of our unique survey of a dozen leading women's sports leagues, compiled for this special edition of the GSSS. Those 12 leagues

comprise 2,461 players at 129 clubs in six sports across eight countries on three continents. Collectively they earn £52.7m (\$68.6m) at an average of £21,427 (\$27,855) each, per year. In diverse sports across different nations and cultures, that group of men in elite team sports are earning 101 times the amount of the elite women.

Yet that is far the whole story, which is also about a wind of change, examined here through a league-by-league dissection, to follow shortly. But first, some women's sport insiders and equality campaigners share their experiences.

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARIES IN THE BEST PAID WOMEN'S SPORTS LEAGUES IN THE WORLD

Conditions differ widely in each league, from season length to the breakdown of pro and amateurs. Full details in report notes

League	Country	Season	Sport	Teams	Players	£ sterling	US \$	Euros €
WNBA	USA 🇺🇸	2017	Basketball 🏀	12	144	£57,490	\$74,759	€64,388
Super Netball	Australia 🇦🇺	2017	Netball 🏉	8	80	£39,978	\$51,987	€44,775
D1 Feminine	France 🇫🇷	2017-18	Football ⚽	12	273	£38,282	\$49,782	€42,188
Frauen-Bundesliga	Germany 🇩🇪	2017-18	Football ⚽	12	278	£33,629	\$43,730	€37,060
FAWSL	England 🇬🇧	2017-18	Football ⚽	10	157	£26,752	\$35,355	€29,962
Damehåndboldligaen	Denmark 🇩🇰	2017-18	Handball 🏐	12	198	£26,378	\$34,861	€29,543
NWSL	USA 🇺🇸	2017	Football ⚽	10	199	£20,805	\$27,054	€23,301
Big Bash	Australia 🇦🇺	2017-18	Cricket 🏏	8	128	£11,802	\$15,347	€13,218
Damallsvenskan	Sweden 🇸🇪	2017	Football ⚽	12	240	£10,889	\$14,160	€12,000
W-League	Australia 🇦🇺	2017-18	Football ⚽	9	162	£8,173	\$10,628	€9,154
AFL Women's	Australia 🇦🇺	2018	Aussie Rules 🏈	8	218	£7,477	\$9,723	€8,374
Liga MX Femenil	Mexico 🇲🇽	2017-18	Football ⚽	16	384	£1,679	\$2,184	€1,881

“Just 0.93 per cent of the world’s professional footballers are women.”





"GIRLS GROWING UP ACROSS ENGLAND REALLY CAN NOW HAVE A DREAM OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER"

In radical proposals that have ignited debate, the English Football Association are planning major changes to introduce a fully professional top division in the English women's game, of up to 14 clubs. And it will happen from next season, 2018-19. The rationale is to provide a 'full-time performance environment' that helps to boost the national team and develop the domestic game. A second tier, semi-professional, will have up to 12 clubs. Currently there are only 10 teams in the top division and half of those are not fully professional. Both the new tiers will be licensed and applications from interested clubs have been submitted. KATIE BRAZIER, the head of women's leagues & competitions at the Football Association, explains the rationale behind the move - and why she believes it will create opportunities, not thwart them.

YOU'RE probably aware that women's football in England is on the up; it is now Britain's fastest growing sport. Whilst we are ahead, it isn't time to rest on our laurels, quite the opposite, it is the time to be bold and take advantage of the momentum.

In September, we announced that – as of next season – Tier 1 of the women's game will be a full-time professional league. It's a decision that we hope will identify domestic women's football in England as the best in the world. The changes are central to our 'Gameplan for Growth' strategy, which will transform the future of the women's game by doubling participants and the fan base by 2020 and delivering consistent success on the world stage by 2023.

The league licence changes aren't a decision we took lightly and it isn't a decision that has initially pleased everyone but it is the correct one and one that the clubs are broadly supportive of. We could have waited and let these changes occur organically (a number of clubs are already working to this model) but that wouldn't allow us to capitalise on the momentum that currently exists. The current licensing term expires at the end of the season and now is the right time to act decisively.

Clubs currently residing in the FA Women's Super League 1 and 2 have now submitted their applications for a licence within either Tier 1 or Tier 2. As part of the application, they have to commit to fulfilling specific minimum

requirements for either the top or second tier, with minimum investment outlined as well as delivery of an elite performance environment including strength and conditioning, performance preparation, medical and player welfare.

"Womans football is now Britain's fastest growing sport"

Clubs are also required to have detailed marketing and commercial plans to support an increase in match day attendances and income generation.

THESE aren't simple requirements for clubs, that's the point and at this moment in time, it might be that clubs currently residing in the top tier will be unable to fulfil these demands. However they are what is required for the game to continue to grow and provide players at the highest level with the support and environment that they deserve for us to stay ahead. The clubs won't be left to fend for themselves financially; the FA will be increasing funding with up to £120,000 per season going to each club in Tier 1 and £61,500 in Tier 2. We also recognise the importance of all the clubs in the pyramid and we will continue to provide support to grow and develop the game at every level.

Many other national associations have chosen not to invest in developing a strong domestic league and this has resulted in their players playing overseas. In contrast, The FA recognises the benefits to be gained through safeguarding and nurturing the pinnacle of the domestic football pyramid in this country and putting into place a successful elite programme.

The changes will benefit the sport both on and off the pitch. A top league of fully professional clubs will be good for our players. The best will now be full-time, benefitting from a minimum of 16 hours – rising to 20 hours – of daytime contact a week, plus matches. To put it simply, talented players will become better.

The reality at the moment is that we have teams preparing to play at the highest level, with players juggling a day job and cramming in training sessions within a busy

week. Now the gap will be bridged between the full-time and part-time clubs within the top tier and we are confident fans, players and partners will be enjoying a more entertaining and unpredictable league as the competitive balance is better. This can only be good news for our international sides or those competing in the UEFA Women's Champions League. The better quality product will drive interest and awareness and will mean more fans through the gates and more people tuning in on TV, radio or online. Greater interest will also raise the profile of players and help attract more commercial investment and provide a stronger, more sustainable commercial model.

THERE'S no doubt that we have a desire for our players to be better rewarded for their hard work. An improved product will help to increase income to support higher clubs' budgets, players' wages and the opportunity for earnings off the pitch. The development of the game in this way will also increase the employment opportunities within the women's game generally, not just for players but also in coaching, refereeing, officiating and administration roles. For example, clubs will now be required to sign up to and deliver The FA's female coach scholarship scheme by providing much needed work placements. The likelihood of making a career in women's football is now greater than ever.

The criteria in place for Tier 2 remains consistent with the current licence and is designed to continue to raise standards and improve the consistency across clubs in terms of playing

environment. We will be providing clubs in Tier 2 with additional tailored support to help bridge the gap and support the transition into the top tier. In essence, clubs at that level will be in a better position to make the move to the top tier when the time is right for them – a climb many would find difficult right now.

From the 2018-19 season, promotion and relegation will be applicable across all levels of the pyramid for the first time since The FA WSL was introduced.

There has been much speculation already as to which clubs may or may not fulfil the top tier criteria and take up a spot for the 2018-19 season. Applications from the current FA WSL 1 and 2 clubs are currently being assessed and clubs outside of The FA WSL will only be given the opportunity to apply for a position once the current club applications are assessed and licences awarded. Subject to availability, applications from clubs currently outside of The FA WSL will be welcomed in March. Clubs will be judged solely on the merits of their application.

Key decisions still need to be made. The name and branding of the leagues covering the top four tiers of the game is currently being considered and which and how many clubs will compete in each league but football loving girls growing up across England really can now have a dream of being a professional footballer.

There can be no doubt that this is one of the most powerful messages the sport can deliver.



Shaun Martyn is a consultant who has spent decades working to improve organisation, communication, performance and culture across industries. His clients have included iPass, Cisco, BASF, JP Morgan, UBS, Moët-Hennessy, NSW Rugby, Telstra and Toyota among others. Martyn is also the founder of FairBreak, which works for gender equality, and founder of the Women's International Cricket League (WICL).

FairBreak is an organisation that aims to create pathways for women to have better access to opportunities, education and high level performance roles - in all sectors of society, not just sport. Their vision is to create a sustainable environment 'that allows women to pursue whatever field of endeavour they like, and to be remunerated fairly and equally.'

The WICL is proposed as an annual women's T20 cricket event involving players from around the world, including but not only from the established 'leading' nations. It is envisaged as a high-octane, high-quality event with significant new earning potential for the players.

The WICL is a response to the fact that - in most countries - there is little or no support or financial opportunity for professional women cricketers compared to their male counterparts. Key to WICL's ethos is the recognition that a successful commercial event is required to drive the provision of opportunity. That in turn depends on the mobilisation of fans of women's sport, and the encouragement of a latent audience for women's sport to become actively engaged. Only through their support and the knowledge among potential major sponsors and broadcasters that the interest is there will significant advances be made.

Here is the rub. The way in which cricket is organised, from top to bottom, creates barriers for innovation. In a nutshell, self-interest trumps the greater good. Restrictive contracting and diktats on where players can and cannot work are a major hurdle.

Here, SHAUN MARTYN explains his philosophy.

As a 10-year-old boy, my first cricket coach told me I was now "playing the game of life, and with life comes hope and opportunity." Over the years I have tried to keep this front of mind.

At the conclusion of the Women's World Cup in Mumbai in 2013 we decided to embark on a mission to create the Women's International

Cricket League (WICL). We had been monitoring the increase in viewer numbers and general interest in the women's game and the notable improvement in the standard of play globally.

At this time, some four years ago, the highest cricket contract paid to any female player was in the vicinity of £8,500 per year (roughly \$11,000).

We deemed this had to change, especially given the level of

commitment from players, the significant increase in the demands made on them and the subsequent expectations.

The concept we formulated was a global one, driving revenue back into all levels of women's cricket, everywhere. We envisaged a new 'product' in the same way women's tennis and women's golf has developed a product that is differentiated from men. We felt creating a tournament with a new

format, distinct 'look and feel' and new technology would enhance what was starting to be done by cricket boards and the ICC.

What we didn't realise, quite naively in retrospect, was that it would be so challenging to build a collaborative partnership with the cricket establishment. Our first meetings were encouraging but quickly we were confronted by the spectre of 'approved' and 'disapproved' cricket.

Ownership of a sport was a foreign concept to us. Sport has custodians, not owners. If anyone 'owns' a sport it is the players and spectators. Somewhere along the way the universe has been tipped on its head and administrations dictate what opportunities are provided.

It's a strange concept in cricket. You bat in partnerships and you bowl in partnership - the game is traditionally built on partnerships.

One of the key elements we believe in for building a strong women's game globally is in the formation of partnerships with a variety of organisations and bodies to create greater opportunity at all levels.

Men have multiple opportunities to ply their trade as professional cricket players around the globe. Women have very few. The emergence of the WBBL in Australia and the Super League in England has been fantastic for the women's game. We need more of these domestic leagues.

The expectation of female players now is to play as full-time professionals, but that opportunity is limited to a select few.

Recent work by Cricket Australia has been ground-breaking and

has seen the bar lifted, as this report details elsewhere. England has some full-time professional players too. But these are among rare exceptions in selected countries. It remains incredibly difficult for most female players to manage a full international schedule and be financially stable based on the money they are earning playing cricket.

To highlight just two examples we believe go to the heart of the matter:

A: The West Indian women's team won the world T20 competition in India in 2016. I'm led to believe their players receive a maximum of around £1,500 (about \$2,000).

B: In South Africa, contracted players receive in the vicinity of £770 per month (about \$1,000). In the Women's World Cup of 2017, these women narrowly missed the final that featured England and India.

Imagine the increase in the standard of play and development of the game in those two countries if their players could train and play as full-time professionals.

Of particular significance was the 126 million worldwide viewing audience for that 2017 women's final. That's a lot of potential advertising revenue. In an ideal world, we would hope all of that would go back into developing women's cricket, everywhere. At a domestic level, very little women's cricket is professional apart from in Australia, where progress is being made. Cricket New South Wales led the way in contracting their domestic female players full-time.

The FairBreak business model has moved forward and grown to encompass all areas of gender equality. Fair Break still uses cricket

as a base but looks to extend opportunities and create pathways in all areas of sport, education, media and business.

In women's cricket, opportunity can take many forms. It can be the opportunity afforded to players or countries to play against better opposition, rather than teams from just one region. It can also be created by looking beyond the traditional presentation of the game as dictated by men's cricket. As we work to move female players to full professional standing, the impact on the communities they live in is significant. There is huge potential for them to inspire their communities and bring about societal benefits in education, health and life skills that far outweigh any notions of 'approved' and 'disapproved' cricket.

If you take a wider, more inclusive and collaborative view you may find that women's cricket affords opportunities that the men's game doesn't. It's then a matter of how you best develop those opportunities to benefit players everywhere.

So why do we, as an organisation focus on cricket?

It's a team game played in over 100 countries. It's not gender specific. It's not body type specific and it's not bound by culture, religion or ethnicity.

It is simple, as my great first coach, Jack Thompson, said to me on that small ground in Bowral, New South Wales, where Don Bradman and so many boys and girls like me learnt to play.

'It's the game of life!' Jack told me. And so it is.

“WOMEN NOT ONLY GET PAID LESS, THEY HAVE HAD FEWER OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY”

More than two years ago, SKINS partnered with Sporting Intelligence for one major reason. In the world of sporting media that is often part of a big media family, including rights holders, Sporting Intelligence is a breath of fresh air for its independence and, as the name says, its intelligence and evidence-based analysis of issues.

It's a no-brainer that we're associated with them again, particularly for this year's Global Sports Salaries Survey which, for the first time, also looks at the state of play for sports women's pay.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to know that the gender pay gap is no more apparent than in the world of sport. Notwithstanding the advance that that has been made by women in some sports and in some countries, the Global Sports Salaries Survey shows just how stark this gap is.

The discrepancy is all too evident in many parts of the working world, and women's treatment in sport is reflective of a wider gender inequality.

In sport, it began in the Victorian era and was perpetuated by 19th century well-meaning folk, such as Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics who described women's sport as "unaesthetic". Unfortunately, as sport has evolved, professionalised and become bigger and bigger businesses, it's also become self-perpetuating.

Women not only get paid less, they have had fewer opportunities to play and have not had the same access to coaching and

facilities. Because women are not paid as much, they also don't have as much time to improve their skills because they need a 'proper' job to earn a living, don't receive the same level of corporate and broadcast support, and so on and on it goes. It's a vicious cycle.

It was, in fact, the concept of equal pay for male and female football players at one particular club that attracted my brand, SKINS, to them – Lewes FC and their ground-breaking campaign known as Equality FC.

They are the first pro or semi-pro club in the world to pay its women's team the same as its men's team. Lewes FC's women's team plays in the Women's Premier League which is the third tier of the national system. Their men's team plays in the eighth tier. Both teams play at least once a week and train twice a week. Both teams are as professional as the other in their attitude to training. Both teams play at the same home ground. When the community took over the ownership of the club, they decided that both teams should get the same level of resources too.

After Equality FC was announced earlier this year, Norway became the first national FA to introduce the same for their national women's team. The mighty US women's national team is also fighting for equal pay with the men's team. All around the world, women's sport – in football, cricket, basketball, netball, tennis, Aussie Rules – are advocating for a bigger and fairer slice of the pie.

Lewes FC just went ahead and did it, and is setting the pace for women's sport.

It's the sort of vision and commitment that we're proud to support as a sponsor. Sure, we've done the easy part with the supply of product. But we've also purchased one Lifetime Ownership share - not an ownership where we've handed-over some corporate dollars, sat back and said 'Thanks for that, we'll see you at the AGM for canapés and a pint'.

What we've done is in line with SKINS brand values as they perfectly complement the values of Equality FC. As a company, we're contributing half the cost of one Lifetime Ownership share that totals just £1,000; SKINS staff and global partners are contributing the rest. They want to because everyone who is part of the SKINS team lives and breathes SKINS' values.

If it's about leveling the sporting field for all, helping to highlight corruption and wrongdoing in sporting bodies, shining a light on racism, sexism, homophobia in sport, inequality, or helping to give power to fans in the relationship between fans and clubs, that's where SKINS is.

SKINS began the moment for change in the international cycling union, UCI, in the wake of the terrible maladministration evident around the time of the Lance Armstrong scandal.

As a co-founder of campaign advocacy group, #NewFIFANow, I have advocated for real reform and change at FIFA.

We were the first brand to challenge Qatar over the kafala slave labour system in relation to the 2022 World Cup, launching a campaign we entitled the 'Hypocrisy World Cup' more than two and a half years ago.

We've called out the International Cricket Board on how it was divvying up resources and matches to benefit the rich cricket nations at the expense of smaller, less wealthy cricket nations.

In Australia over the past two years, we've run a 'Rainbow Round of Sport' across all of the four major football codes and netball to highlight the issues faced by members of the LGBTI community on-and-off the sporting field. Athletes and clubs from professional and community sport have supported the initiative by wearing #RainbowLaces in huge numbers.

In England, we created the 'Fans, Not Numbers' campaign focused on helping fans shift the power relationship between them and clubs. This was motivated by what was happening to clubs such as Blackpool, Coventry City and Leyton Orient. When SKINS sat down with the supporters, supporters groups, Supporters Direct and SPORF, we realised that the common factor that was the source of many of the problems was the lack of a regulatory regime around the management and operation of clubs. I'm absolutely delighted that Blackpool fans recently had a win in Court against its owners.

In other words, at SKINS we live to #RiseUp and push the boundaries – just as Sporting Intelligence does by shining a light on issues from a unique, journalistic perspective.

Jaimie Fuller
Executive Chairman



EQUALITYFC



SKINS™

SKINS™

SKINS™



SKINS COLLECTION
SKINS.NET



SKINS COLLECTION
SKINS.NET

WNBA ANALYSIS

WOMEN'S NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



TOTAL SALARIES:

£8.28M
\$10.8M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£57,490
\$74,759



THE LOWDOWN

The WNBA is one of the few wholly professional women's team leagues in world sport. By this we mean that a) every player is contracted to earn a minimum salary; b) that salary is at the very least a 'living wage' in the nation where the league is based, and preferably around or above the average or median national wage; and c) that the 'professionalism' of the league extends to sufficient 'contact hours', and facilities, equipment, expenses and other support as necessary to allow 'full-time' pursuit of the sport.

That might seem like a subjective set of criteria, not least in part c, but the spirit of these definitions for professionalism should be clear enough. And the WNBA is a fully professional league, as well as the best paid women's league (by average player salary).

Every WNBA player is contracted, with stipulated minimums. The lowest basic pay for any WNBA player in 2017 was \$40,439 and the highest was \$113,500. Those sums rise to \$41,202 and \$115,500 respectively in 2018. The salary at multiple points between those figures depends on a player's status (rookie or veteran), pick number and years service. Tables of pay grades are included in the comprehensive collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the WNBA for 2014 to 2021 inclusive, a copy of which is available in the resources section of the Sporting Intelligence website. [CLICK HERE](#)

That \$40,439 minimum for 2017 is not so far away from \$44,980 reported by the USA's Bureau of Labor Statistics as the median full-time income of America's 114.9 million full-time workers in the first quarter of 2017, or \$865 per week. The average WNBA salary was \$74,759 in 2017, well above that national median income.

As for the WNBA's wider professionalism, the CBA provides insight, including a fascinating section on expenses (from page 92 onwards). Expenses range from housing stipends to training camp costs, hotel room provision for away games up to first-class single rooms dependent on years of service, and per diem meal expenses 'on the road', which were \$78 per day in 2017.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We have obtained the official WNBA player payroll totals for the 12 teams in the 2017 season. There were as follows, in descending order:

Atlanta Dream \$938,983; Minnesota Lynx, \$956,653; Phoenix Mercury, \$955,960; LA Sparks, \$950,625; Washington Mystics, \$931,697; Connecticut Sun, \$914,221; New York Liberty, \$876,136; San Antonio Stars, \$860,911; Indiana Fever, \$924,936; Dallas Wings, \$848,852; Seattle Storm, \$818,032; Chicago Sky \$788,291

GLOBAL POSITIONING

It has been prominently noted in recent years that many WNBA players spend their off-season playing for second teams in foreign leagues, occasionally for enormous sums they could not possibly earn at home where there is a cap on individual pay. It happens, and more players now go abroad during this time than stay at home. But they are not all beneficiaries of huge extra paydays. Those tend to come at a select few teams in a select few leagues - with the stress on 'few' in both cases.

Most prominent among those leagues (for those biggest paydays) are the top divisions in Russia and Turkey. And within the former, the particularly rich clubs currently are UMMC Ekaterinburg (winners of the last nine straight Russian Women's Premier League titles) and Dynamo Kursk. Notwithstanding that there is no accurate wage data publicly available for these teams, let alone for the leagues, it is understood such wealth is not widespread. Where huge wages exist, they are 'subsidised' for commercial and PR reasons, as in Ekaterinburg by mining firm UMMC. Hence our belief is that the WNBA remains - as far as is demonstrable - the best paid women's league as whole, as well as the best women's basketball league by strength in depth.

SUPER NETBALL ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£4.2M
\$3.2M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£39,978
\$51,987

THE LOWDOWN

The inaugural season of Suncorp Super Netball was in 2017, with eight teams playing a 14-game regular season from February to May followed by a four-game finals series in June. Five of the teams emerged from the now defunct ANZ Championship (across Australia and New Zealand) with three new teams (the Magpies, Giants and Lightning) owned by existing clubs operating in other sports, either Aussie Rules or Rugby League. Two of these 'expansion teams', Sunshine Coast Lightning and Giants Netball, contested the inaugural Super Netball final, Lightning winning the title. Super Netball meets our definition of fully professional on all fronts. All 80 competitors, or 10 players per team (and 16 of the total being international imports) have annual contracts averaging 20 hours per week. The average salary of AUS\$67,500 (Australian dollars), equated to almost £40,000 at exchange rates applicable in mid-2017, the time the first season ended. This was almost exactly the same as the average Australian full-time worker's income according to latest OECD figures.

In addition to wages, Super Netball players are protected by a new 'parental care' policy, have private health insurance contributions of up to AUS\$1,500 per year, and have 100 per cent income protection on all earnings for up to two years in the event of injury or pregnancy.

The parental leave policy is a first for Australian sport. Athletes with infants are provided additional support to return to the sport. Players with children of 12 months and younger have their travel to matches with their children and a carer covered at the expense of their club. For athletes with children older than 12 months, further support is determined on a club-by-club basis.

A player who becomes pregnant is guaranteed to be paid for the term of their contract, or a two-year period, whichever comes first, and carry out off-court activities for the club in that time, including ambassadorial roles. Parental leave is a basic entitlement under the Paid Parental Leave Act in Australia, but a two-year guaranteed contract goes above and beyond for athletes.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Each club has just under £400,000 at summer 2017 exchange rates to spend on 10 contracted athletes (AUS\$675,000). They each spend that at an average of just under £40,000 per player across the league. The minimum player salary is AUS\$27,375. For comparison, the minimum wage in Australia is AUS\$18.29 an hour, so a 20-hour week for 52 weeks would pay \$AUS19,022, and the minimum netball rate is 44 per cent above that.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

This league is the pre-eminent and best paying netball league in the world. Most of the players are from Australia, who are the global powerhouse nation as measured by World Cup wins. Australia have won the World Cup 11 times, and won six of the last seven.

D1 FÉMININE ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£10.5M
\$13.6M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£38,282
\$49,782

THE LOWDOWN

The top level of women's football in France is Division 1 Féminine (abbreviated to D1F) and features 12 teams playing 22 games in the season, home and away once against each rival. The most successful team in the league's history are Lyon (15 titles) and 11 of those have come in the last 11 consecutive seasons from 2007 and 2017 inclusive. Lyon have also won the French women's cup a record seven times, all since 2008, and have won the women's European Champions League a joint record four times times, all since 2011, while being runners-up on two other occasions.

Lyon also happen to be, unsurprisingly, the best paid women's football team anywhere (by average salary). Their ability to offer comparatively huge wages means they have been able to attract some of the world's best players. But there is a new kid on the block, and a challenger in financial and sporting terms, in the shape of Paris-Saint-Germain Féminines, the women's department of the Qatar-funded Ligue 1 men's club, PSG. With the women's World Cup being hosted by France for the first time in 2019, there is a concerted push by teams in France to bolster their domestic game, and the nation's standing, with Lyon and PSG at the forefront.

Seven of the past eight women's Champions League finals have featured either Lyon or PSG, and in 2017 the final featured both, Lyon beating PSG on penalties in Cardiff.

It is largely through the financial outlay of that pair, which is head and shoulders above the other 10 clubs - Montpellier, Bordeaux, Paris FC, Marseille, Lille, Fleury, Rodez, ASJ Soyaux, ASPTT and Guingamp - that D1F is the best paid women's football league in the world. Lyon's president Jean-Michel Aulas has made it his mission since the late 1980s to attempt to make both the men's and women's teams into serial champions, putting his money where his mouth is. The D1F is not fully professional by any of our three definitions: not all players are contracted to earn a minimum sum, or indeed any money; therefore wages don't meet living wage standards at some clubs; and 'professionalism' as



defined by contact hours, facilities, equipment and support is lacking at the smallest teams with the lowest budgets, who are semi-pro at best.

The French FA cannot provide information about the finances at women's clubs, saying salaries in particular are a business matter for their clubs alone, on a case by case basis. We contacted all the clubs and had communication with a variety, on a confidential basis. Our findings in this report derive from what we were told.

It has been reported Lyon's annual budget (for all spending, not just wages) has risen as high as €8m (£7.14m) and that PSG's is not far behind, although sources insist neither is spending quite that much, yet, and the true figure is closer to €11m-€12m combined in 2017-18, with Lyon ahead.

Lyon and PSG combined are spending between 50 and 60 per cent of all the money spent (and all wages) in DF1. That's one sixth of the clubs with six-tenths of the resources.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The biggest annual contracts at Lyon and PSG, including benefits, run to hundreds of thousands of euros per year. Our survey found the average annual player salary at Lyon is around €162,000 and at PSG around €127,000, and potentially higher with bonuses.

In researching the situation more widely in Europe, sources in other leagues spoke about agents acting for unnamed players at Lyon (in Lyon's squad but not among their top stars) who are looking at options for either January or next summer. 'One agent told us his player's requirements included €100,000 a year in salary, basic, plus accommodation and auto,' said a manager at one club.

Total budgets at the smallest D1F clubs are a few hundred thousands euros per year. Several clubs confirmed their player wage spending was typically in the region of 65 per cent of their total budget. The monthly gross pre-tax average salary is below €1,000 per month at some clubs, well below in one case. While there are 273 players in the first-team squads in D1F, only 153 have full professional contracts, others have part-time deals and one club has no professionals.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

In international women's football, the top four countries in FIFA's world rankings are the USA (at No1) followed by Germany, England and France, as at 1 September 2017. That quartet also have the 'best' and best paid women's professional domestic leagues, but not in the same order. D1F is top in that regard - and it is worth reiterating that is largely a result of big expenditure by its two biggest, richest clubs. Details about the other three leagues are below.

FRAUEN-BUNDESLIGA



ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£9.4M
12.2M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£33,629
\$43,730

THE LOWDOWN

The top level of women's football in Germany is the Frauen-Bundesliga and has 12 teams playing 22 games in the season, home and away once against each other.

The most successful teams in the league's history are FF Frankfurt (7 titles) and then Turbine Potsdam (6) although in recent years Wolfsburg have been the dominant force. Wolfsburg's three titles have all come in the past five seasons (2013, 2014 and 2017) with Bayern Munich winning in 2015 and 2016 as Wolfsburg were runners-up. Wolfsburg have also won four of the past five finals of the DFB Pokal - Germany's major domestic cup competition, and won the European Champions League twice.

In the 16 seasons since the women's Champions League began in 2001-02, German clubs have won the majority of the finals (nine of 16) with Frankfurt winning four, Wolfsburg and Turbine Potsdam two each and Duisberg one.

The German FA were not able to provide detailed financial information, but did confirm the total number of players in the women's Bundesliga for the 2017-18 season at 278. We were able to obtain a detailed financial breakdown about league-wide budgets and expenditure annually since 2012-13 from other sources. Club insiders who responded to our survey request for information provided insight into current wage levels.

Budgeting documentation shows the Bundesliga's 12 clubs combined spent €13.9m (£12.4m at today's rates) in 2012-13 on all costs. The biggest single cost was personnel for match days (players and coaches) at 54 per cent of the total, then match costs (travel, hotels and so on) on 18 per cent, second teams and youth teams at nearly 10 per cent and other expenses including all other staff at 18 per cent. The breakdowns vary from club to club but remain consistent over the seasons. By 2015-16, total expenditure for all the clubs combined was €20.3m, of which €11.1m was for match personnel, mostly player wages.



The official league data for 2016-17 is expected to show total expenditure rose above €21.5m, and match personnel costs climbed too; this current season will have grown again. Our survey findings put player wages alone at about £9.4m this season, across the 278 players, at an average of £33,629.

Five of the 12 clubs have wage levels above that average and seven below it. The ratio between salaries at the best paid club and lowest paid club is around seven to one. Officials at a variety of clubs who helped with this survey wanted to stress the financial resources within the 12 teams are diverse; that all clubs allocate money to youth development (girls' teams); that with employee benefits, costs per player (in expense and benefits) rise hundreds of euros per month above what the players receive; and that league rules stipulate all teams must employ a full-time general manager as well as a full-time head coach. At the smallest clubs, some key staff (lower-grade coaches, physios, positional coaches and match day staff) are volunteers.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Wolfsburg are the best funded club with a budget in the region of €3.5m for the season with capacity to be slightly bigger. Our calculations suggest their average first-team pay is just under €100,000 per player this season, with Bayern not far behind at around €85,000, then a drop to Frankfurt and Turbine Potsdam, where average salaries are around €50,000, give or take a couple of thousand. Our survey replies suggest three clubs then form a 'middle order' financially with monthly average pay in the range €2,500 to €3,000 (annual €30,000 to €35,000) and they are Freiburg, SC Sand and Duisberg. The bottom five clubs in pay terms seem to be Hoffenheim, Koln, Werder Bremen, USV Jena and Essen, each with total budgets well under €1m a year, and average player pay from about €18,000 a year (€1,500 a month) to below €15,000, or under €1,200 a month.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

The Frauen-Bundesliga is a top-two European (and global) women's league in terms of pay, and arguably the most 'balanced' of the big European women's leagues. While Wolfsburg and Bayern are clearly the richest, they are nowhere near as far ahead in resources as France's 'big two' in relation to their nearest competitors.

FAWSL ANALYSIS



* OF 367 PLAYERS AT FAWSL CLUBS IN 2017-18, INCLUDING YOUNG DEVELOPMENT SQUADS, ONLY 157 ARE CONTRACTED.

TOTAL SALARIES:

£4.2M
\$5.5M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£26,752
\$35,355

THE LOWDOWN

The top level of women's football in England is the FA Women's Super League (1), the higher of two 10-team FAWSL divisions. The current season will involve each team playing home and away against every other team. The top flight of English women's football has been restructured multiple times, most recently in 2011, and will be again for the 2018-19 season. An explanation of the rationale behind that, written by the FA's head of women competitions Katie Brazier, is published elsewhere in this report.

In the league's current seven-year incarnation, three teams have won the title twice (Arsenal, Liverpool and Chelsea) and Manchester City have won once. Other teams outside that quartet who have finished in the top two in last seven years are Birmingham (in 2011 and 2012) and Bristol (in 2013).

The FAWSL operates a 'soft' salary cap whereby permitted spending on salaries is related to club income; teams can spend a maximum sum on player wages equivalent to 40 per cent of their revenue. So in crude terms if your income is £1m for the season, you can spend £400,000 on player salaries. If it's £500,000, you can spend £200,000. The FAWSL in 2017 has teams at the extremes who respectively have income at almost double £1m (with proportionate salaries) and income well below half £500,000, and ditto.

The FA introduced the 40 per cent rule 'to control salary costs and promote sustainability. This was felt to be more relevant for the league, whilst its clubs seek to attract new investment and operate a range of club finance/revenue models.'

The salary cap spending calculation for each club includes gross player salaries (pre-tax), bonuses, accommodation expenses where applicable to an annual maximum of £5,000, and pension contributions.



The FA says that there are 367 players across the FAWSL teams, although that includes a significant number of 'development' players who are either in the reserves or in the junior system but affiliated to the senior teams. And there are 157 professional players who are contracted with clubs, most of them 'professional' although some of those in reality are semi-pro at best. Those 157 players will earn a combined £4.2m in wages in the 2017-18 season at an average of £26,752 each.

Wages at different clubs vary, as in most leagues and within most teams, of any sport and gender. The £26,752 average does not include any payments made for international team contracts, domestic or European cup appearance fees or bonuses, 'reasonable' expenses for travel, kit, club clothing or meals while on club duty, medical insurance, education fees (where applicable) or for separate non-playing roles within clubs, for example in community coaching or office administration.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The average of £26,752 for the 157 contracted players is a matter of fact according to the FA. We spoke to clubs across the FAWSL and found that four of them paid higher than that average in wages (three of those only just higher) and six paid lower. There appears to be a clear top payer in Manchester City. Even City's own financial accounts for their women's team as registered at Companies House for the season two years ago (2015-16) shows a wage bill of more than £1m for all employees, against income of £1.243m. With total income closer to £2m now, you would expect player wages by themselves to be £800,000 or a bit higher and about £40,000 per year, on average, basic, per year.

All sources point to a wage hierarchy in the FAWSL that has Man City at the top followed by Chelsea and Arsenal, a gap and then Liverpool, four 'middling' teams in Reading, Sunderland, Birmingham and Everton and then the two smallest teams, financially, Bristol and Yeovil.

Club sources at multiple teams cited a 'typical first-11 average basic' at the biggest clubs of around £60,000 per year, and less for other squad players at those clubs. That then falls closer to £20,000 for the contracted players at the middling clubs, and towards low single-digit thousands at the bottom.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

The FAWSL is the third best paid in Europe, and the third best according to various other metrics.

DAMEHÅNDBOLDLIGAEN

ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£5.3M
\$6.9M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£26,378
\$34,861

THE LOWDOWN

The Danish women's handball league features 12 teams playing a regular season of 22 games. The top six progress to the play-offs, where they are split into two groups and the group winners meet in the final.

While football is the national sport of Denmark, as it is in so many countries, handball is immensely popular, with around 150,000 registered players in a nation of fewer than six million people. The Danish women's international team have won Olympic handball gold more times than any other country (three) and while they have declined from that peak since the mid-Noughties, Danish handball remains well respected. Similarly the league is still regarded as the best, at least in terms of depth. This isn't perhaps surprising given that modern handball was effectively invented in Denmark - or rather codified there in the late 19th century. It is part of the sporting fabric, and as such attracts paying crowds in the thousands (in venues of capacity from 1,000 to 3,000) and commercial backers.

There is an ongoing debate in Denmark about what the women's domestic clubs need to do to regain the dominance they enjoyed at the highest level (European Champions League) between 2000 and 2010. A bit more spending seems to be the answer, if largely to attract some of the biggest names who currently follow the money to clubs in other countries, notably a core of teams who are extremely wealthy due to a single philanthropic backer, or local (municipal) funding.

Romania's Cristina Neagu, for example, sometimes known as 'the Messi of handball' and regarded by many as the greatest player of all time, plays for CSM Bucharest, and her salary of €300,000 a year (or about £268,000) comes from the budget of Bucharest City Hall. Other clubs who can and do pay marquee names big money include Budućnost in Montenegro, Győri in Hungary and Vardar in Macedonia. Unsurprisingly they are the dominant teams in their own countries, and latterly, in Europe. The last six Champions Leagues titles have been split between Győri, Bucharest and Győri while Vardar have reached the semi-finals four years in a row.



THE BOTTOM LINE

The budgets in the league vary massively from top to bottom, for all costs, not just wages. Sources say the 'big five' financially are Midtjylland, Viborg, Odense, Esbjerg and Randers, each with budgets in the range of 7.5m Danish Krone per year to about 10 million DKK, or from about £900,000 to £1.2m. At the other end, they can be as low as 1m DKK or even less (£120,000 or less). Last season, for example, sources confirm Skanderborg had an entire team of amateurs; not a single player had a contract. They were relegated. This season, 2017-18, promoted Ajax København don't pay all their players, and of those with contracts, the salaries are low. At the time of writing and 11 games into the season, they have lost all 11 games.

The best paid individual players in Danish handball earn more than £100,000 a year while the average salaries at the top clubs range from around £38,000 to £50,000. This is at first-team level among the 16 or 17 main roster players; teams often have junior systems too. The other clubs range from a majority of unpaid players via average annual salaries just above £10,000 to salaries hovering around £20,000.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

Well-financed individual clubs in some nations mentioned above have become European powerhouse teams. This is causing no end of introspection in Denmark. But the Danish women's league as a whole remains the best paid with greater competitive balance among its own teams.

NWSL ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£4.1M
\$5.4M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£20,805
\$27,054

THE LOWDOWN

The National Women's Soccer League was formed in 2012 and started playing in 2013 as the latest incarnation of the top division of women's football in the USA. The 2017 season featured 10 teams playing 24 regular season games each (12 at home, and 12 away) before a play-off involving the top four teams in semi-finals then a Championship game. Portland Thorns FC finished second in the league standings and went on to win the title by beating North Carolina Courage (first in the regular season) in the final.

The NWSL is run by the United States Soccer Federation, a particularly important fact given that the USSF is also responsible for the US national teams - and the USSF pays the salaries of some of the players in the NWSL, for playing in the NWSL.

The way in which salaries are controlled and allocated seems, on the face of it, to be simple enough, and you can read at the NWSL website the general overview, here: <https://www.nwslsoccer.com/2017-roster-rules>.

There was a salary cap in place for 2017 of \$315,000 per team (£242,000), and with each team typically having a roster of 20 players, that works out at an average salary of \$15,750 per player per year (£12,115). The roster rules also stipulated that every player must be paid at least \$15,000 (£11,538), and that the maximum salary for any player was \$41,700 (£32,077). That is the theory. The reality differs.

Unlike in MLS, the top division of men's football in the USA and Canada, there is no transparency over individual player pay in the NWSL. Basic pay for every single MLS player is made public, to the last cent, by the players' union, twice each year. The NWSL say only that player salary details are confidential, and those details are not the only thing undisclosed. There is a salary floor in the NWSL as well as a cap, for example, although the level is a secret. And the cap itself is a 'soft cap' that is actually different for each team - something else that is not widely known. Further, the \$315,000 figure does not come close to representing what the players in the 20-women rosters at each club actually earn for playing for that team.



NATIONAL WOMEN'S SOCCER LEAGUE

This survey was helped hugely by inside information and guidance from a number of knowledgeable sources across the NWSL, and our findings suggest even the lowest paid team collectively earned more than \$400,000 between them, or \$20,198 each, on average (£15,537). That was Washington Spirit. And by our reckoning the 20 roster players at Portland Thorns earned around \$716,000 between them (£551,000) or an average of \$35,798 (£27,537).

The complicating factor in the way the players are paid - and the thing that makes the difference in earnings at different clubs - is that the wages of players who are centrally contracted by the US women's national team are paid by the USSF, and not by their clubs, and the same is true of Canadian players who are contracted by the Canadian FA.

As part of the contracts to play for their countries (and 'part' needs to be stressed), those players are allocated a portion of that contractual salary to play for (and be obliged to play for) a team in the NWSL. And that sum is not controlled by the maximum individual salary levels allowed in the league. So there are US and Canadian international players earning more than \$41,700 a season for their club work, as well as - in some cases - much more substantial figures for their work with their countries. That in turn can be boosted by appearances and bonuses.

Crucially, wages paid by the federations to players for their club jobs are not counted in the \$315,000 cap spending. So far, so complicated. Now we can move on to how the \$315,000 salary cap is not even the same cap for each team, and why. The 32 US and Canada internationals (or 'federation players') in the NWSL in 2017 were not spread 'evenly' across the 10 teams. Washington Spirit had no USA internationals for example, and two Canadians. At the other extreme, Portland had five USA 'federation players' and a Canadian.

The NWSL rule-makers recognise that there is a possibility of a significant qualitative difference between a team where a sizeable group of the players are top internationals (from the USA, Canada or elsewhere), and a team where there are few or none.

So the cap is tweaked on a club-by-club basis to recognise this. We learned that the \$315,000 cap is based on the theoretical premise that each team has three USA federation players and two Canadian federation players per 20-woman squad. The cap per club is then adjusted accordingly, depending on how many or how few federation players each team actually has.

If a team has more than those 3+2, for example, then a sum is taken away from cap spending, per extra player, to reflect that has those extra high-quality players having their wages paid by somebody else (the federation). And if a team has fewer than the 3+2, the \$315,000 is increased so the team can spend more on other high-quality players, perhaps from overseas.

For illustrative purposes only, imagine Team A had only two federation players instead of five. Their cap level is increased by one salary outlay per "missing" player, or by three players in this case. If one salary outlay is \$15,750 (the average of 20 players if splitting a \$315,000 cap), then Team A's cap is inflated by \$47,250 (or three times \$15,750). Similarly if a team has more than their nominal 3+2 allocation, their cap is reduced below \$315,000, by one salary outlay per extra player. Knowing how the structure works, and having been guided by sources on 'ball park' figures for federation players, it becomes possible to work out, approximately, what each team earns collectively for their club football duties; and hence the average pay per club and across the NWSL. Individual player salaries range from \$15,000 up to five times as much (for club duties).

THE BOTTOM LINE

With the proviso that our calculations are based on guidance about contracts, and that these sums are what we understand the players collectively earn for their club football (as opposed to are paid by their clubs, which is different), the following reflects annual average earnings at each club in 2017, to the nearest thousand dollars / pounds. Portland Thorns \$36,000 (£28,000); Orlando Pride \$30,000 (£23,000); FC Kansas City (\$30,000) £23,000; Houston Dash \$28,000 (£22,000); Chicago Red Stars \$28,000 (£21,000); North Carolina Courage \$27,000 (£21,000); Boston Breakers \$24,000 (£18,000); Seattle Reign FC \$24,000 (£18,000); Sky Blue FC \$24,000 (£18,000); Washington Spirit \$20,000 (£16,000).

GLOBAL POSITIONING

The USA women's national team are the best in the world, ranked No1 by FIFA and winners of a record three World Cups, including the most recent in 2015. The NWSL is not the best women's league in the world, qualitatively, although along with the leagues in France, Germany and England is up there. It does have some of the world's best players - but arguably only because their federation, the USSF, dictates they must play there as part of their central contracts.



BIG BASH ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£1.5M
\$2M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£11,802
\$15,347

THE LOWDOWN

The Women's Big Bash League is an eight-team T20 tournament about to start a third season, the 2017-18 campaign, which is scheduled to run from 9 December 2017 to 4 February 2018. The format for the WBBL is 14 games per team in a group stage followed by a knockout stage of semi-finals and a final. The reigning champions from 2016-17 are the Sydney Sixers.

The administrator of the event is Cricket Australia (CA), formerly known as the Australian Cricket Board, which is the governing body for cricket in Australia.

We feature the WBBL in this report because it is the premium league (and best paid) in women's professional 'club' cricket, globally. It should be noted that the average salary of £11,802 per player is for a two-month block of work / play. So while in itself it would not be a lucrative living if the players appeared only in that event each year, the reality is they don't. Most of them are also playing for other teams the rest of the time, whether internationally and / or at state / county level or elsewhere.

What is particularly interesting about Australian women's cricket is the depth and breadth of investment by CA, put in place in the past year. It is worth exploring because it is driving a culture of professionalism - and sporting excellence - that goes from state level to international level via the popular, glitzy WBBL. It is also creating sustainable careers for hundreds of women, some of whom can now earn six-figures a year (pounds) from their playing contracts.

The publicly stated aims of Cricket Australia include 'achieve gender equity across Australian Cricket', 'accelerate opportunities for women in all areas and levels of our game', 'grow female participation sustainably, and make sure women and girls find cricket clubs welcoming and enjoyable places to be' and '[make cricket] a viable professional career for female talented athletes, who will be supported by an expansive and structured pathway.'

They are putting their money where their mouth is, allocating AUS\$55 million (£32.6m) over the next five years into professional contracts for women players.



There were 134 such contracts in place in the 2016-17 cricket season and there will be a similar number in 2017-18; numbers will fluctuate at any one time, but the trend is up.

There are three types of contract and various permutations of them. Cricket Australia central contracts to play for Australia's international team are worth a guaranteed minimum 'retainer' fee of £42,700 this season. State contracts, to play for a state team, are worth a guaranteed minimum retainer of £15,438 this season. Retainer levels may be higher than these on a case by case basis, but all these retainers are supplemented with match fees, performance payments, marketing payments, prize money and other benefits.

Contracts to play in the WBBL are separate, with a minimum retainer fee of £6,097 for the two-month season that rises to the average £11,802 we found in our study.

It is when players have contracts covering two of the three categories (national / state / WBBL) that cricket for Australian women can become not just a viable career but a good living.

As things stand at the time of writing, 13 Australian players have national contracts and all of those also have WBBL contracts. That guarantees those players around £50,000 basic pay, with realistic potential to take it above £100,000 per year if playing regularly for Australia, and winning.

The 'majority experience' of the Australian professional woman cricketer is to have a dual contract covering state and WBBL duties; there are around 77 players in that category and they are guaranteed minimum salaries of £21,298 that more typically rise to £27,000 plus performance and other payments on top.

There are also players contracted to play either only state cricket, or only WBBL cricket. There are around 21 in the first category and 30 in the second. They are guaranteed minimum payments of £15,438 and £6,097 respectively. The averages are higher and supplemented with bonuses and benefits.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The average WBBL player will earn around £11,000 for the two-month event. Most of the players involved will also have national or state contracts on top. If you make the crude calculation that a pot of around AUS\$55m will potentially be divided over the next five years between a pool of about 134 women, the average salary for that sizeable cohort works out at about £48,600 per player per year

GLOBAL POSITIONING

Australian women's cricket is the best in the world, and its best players are the best paid, and the WBBL is the preeminent women's cricket league, and best paid.

DAMALLSVENSKAN ANALYSIS




TOTAL SALARIES:

£2.6M
\$3.4M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£10,889
\$14,160

THE LOWDOWN

The Damallsvenskan consists of 12 teams playing 20 games each and the most recent season, 2017, ended with Linköpings FC as champions, with FC Rosengård as runners-up. When Rosengård won the title in 2014 and 2015, they had Brazilian superstar Marta - the best paid female footballer in the world - in their team. She had played in Sweden early in her career at Umeå IK and returned to Sweden in 2012 to play for Tyreso FF, famously on a contract worth \$400,000 a year that the club's owners said was being paid by external sponsors. Tyreso won the title that year, 2012, and Marta was still with them when they reached the 2014 Champions League final, which they lost to Wolfsburg. Tyreso filed for bankruptcy the same year, as they were heading to a showpiece final, and were then liquidated. Marta moved to Rosengård, and then on to Orlando Pride in the NWSL.

Although the Damallsvenskan continue to employ some foreign stars, most of the players are Swedish and most of those who aren't are from other Scandinavian countries. Around 110 of the 240 first-team players have professional contracts and about 40 of those are foreign players. About half of Sweden's best Swedish players (or a dozen of those called up to recent international squads) play outside Sweden, in France, Germany or England, indicative of the better earning potential elsewhere.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Across the league as a whole, including part-timers and amateurs, the average basic salary was £10,889 (\$14,160), which is around €1,000 per month. According to Magnus Erlingmark, secretary general of the Swedish Spelarförbundet (Players' Association), the corresponding average wage in the top division of Swedish men's football is around €9,000 per month.



GLOBAL POSITIONING

The Swedish league is highly rated in terms of UEFA coefficient, which is the statistical assessment of strength over a rolling period. So, for example, entry berths to the 2017-18 women's Champions League were allocated on the basis of UEFA's 2016 coefficients, which take into account club performances in Europe in the five seasons from 2011-12 to 2015-16 inclusive. On that basis Sweden was third behind Germany and France, and ahead of England, Spain and Russia. So the Damallsvenskan remains one of the major domestic women's leagues of Europe. Further, UEFA figures say Sweden has twice the number of professional players than Norway, for example, and four times the number in Finland, to give examples of other nations in the region. But whether Sweden will hold that No3 place for much longer is uncertain.

W-LEAGUE ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£1.3M
\$1.7M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£8,173
\$10,628

THE LOWDOWN

The W-League was established in 2008 with a first season in 2008-09, and is now contested by nine teams, most of which are affiliated to a men's team. The league is in transition, in a positive way, in what the main stakeholders in the game Down Under hope will lead towards professionalism in all senses. Those stakeholders are the FFA (the governing body for football in Australia), the W-League as an administrative body and competition holder and the players' union Professional Footballers Australia (PFA), whose chief executive John Didulica, has authored a report called 'From Grassroots to Greatness - a roadmap for women's football in Australia.'

That was produced on the back of a 2016 survey of women's professional players in the W-League, most of whom were semi-professional, at best. Of the 111 who took part, 13 were Australian internationals.

That survey found, for example, that 85 per cent of players earned less than £3,000 per season for playing football, while a quarter of players earned less than £300 per season. More than half of the players said they spent 20 or more hours per week in other paid work or studying - while also playing top-division football. And 90 per cent said they would consider leaving football early in their career to pursue a more financially rewarding career.

As one player said: 'One thousand dollars a season has been my pay for the past four seasons - it doesn't even cover my costs to get to training. I earn more a month from my part-time job than I do playing in the top women's football league. Often I have to cancel shifts due to my football commitments. This means that it costs me to play in the W-League.'

Changes have been made and from the 2017-18 season, recently underway, there is a minimum salary in place of around £5,700 for a 23-week contract. Clubs must spend a minimum of 18 times that sum on basic player contracts,



or £103,000 per club at least. Other new benefits include up to £860 per week football and non-football income protection; a maternity policy where airfares and accommodation are provided for children aged three or younger, travelling with their mothers for games; and minimum medical standards in line with the men's A-League.

There is a theoretical salary cap of £171,000 per squad for the current season, although some clubs will spend more if they utilise marquee player or guest player rules, which allow additional spending.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Although some FFA numbers have suggested the average salary in the W-League could rise above £10,000 for the current season, internal club and union estimates based on spending so far put the average basic at closer to AU\$13,800, or closer to £8,000. Players who are also contracted separately to play for the Australia women's international team earn around £32,000 per year for that, so can be earning £40,000-plus, and perhaps more if playing in Europe or the USA in the W-League's off-season.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

Australia is a big nation geographically (sixth largest land mass), middling in population (ranked 54th, with 24.7m people) and prone to insert itself into other continents in the arts and sport. It takes part in Europe's Eurovision Song Contest for example. It is part of Asia in a footballing sense, as a member of the Asian Football Confederation, having left the Oceania Football Confederation in 2006. Australia's domestic women's football is arguably most comparable to other Asian leagues, not least in Japan and South Korea, in as much as they are evolving from amateurism, are well short of being fully professional, but have a core of internationals who earn a decent living.

AFL WOMEN'S ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£1.6M
\$2.1M

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£7,477
\$9,723

THE LOWDOWN

AFL Women's league (AFLW) had its inaugural season in 2017, with eight teams involved in a competition run by the Australian Football League (AFL), which runs the most popular sports competition in the country in the men's AFL. Attendance per game in AFL Women's in the first season ranged from an average of 5,000 per match at Melbourne to 8,465 at Carlton. The season ran over eight weeks through February and March and the grand final was won by Adelaide in front of a crowd of almost 16,000. The biggest attendance of the season was 24,568 for Carlton v Collingwood and the seasonal average was 6,828. There is already a demonstrable appetite for the competition and expansion to 14 teams is envisaged by the end of 2020.

The 2018 season will include more 'contact' hours per player, and better pay than the first year. Contracts were for nine hours per week in 2017, plus matches; in 2018 that will rise to 10 hours in the season after 13 hours per week in pre-season.

The minimum salary will rise from £4,900 to £6,000. Marquee players' pay (also known as Tier 1 players, two per team) will rise from £9,700 to £11,500 and Tier 2 players' pay will rise from £6,900 to £8,300.

For guiding us around her sport and explaining the genesis of the league, we are indebted to Chyloe Kurdas, a pioneer in women's Aussie Rules who spent 15 years as a player and coach. She has also spent a decade and more helping to increase participation levels then developing a high-performance structure that in effect became the AFL Women's competition.

Of particular interest and relevance to this survey is Kurdas's observation that the AFL Women's teams are considered intrinsic parts of the pre-existing men's clubs whose names they share. They are, by and large, fully integrated into the football operations divisions of those clubs with equal access to the same facilities and support, if not pay, yet.



The average men's AFL annual salary now is £176,690, or nearly £170,000 more than in AFLW. To put that in context, if the men took a 1 per cent pay cut, it would cover a 100 per cent pay rise for the women. But that differential is not what matters for now; it's that a women's professional league is up and running, and succeeding.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Total player payments in 2017 were approaching £1.3m but they will rise closer to £1.6m in 2018, to produce average pay for the short-form season of £7,477. Budgets at the different clubs are close to parity.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

There is only one women's professional Aussie Rules league.

LIGA MX FEMENIL ANALYSIS



TOTAL SALARIES:

£645,120
\$838,656

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£1,679
\$2,184

THE LOWDOWN

The Liga MX Femenil was established less than a year ago, in December 2016, and comprises women's teams from 16 of the 18 clubs that play in the men's Liga MX. The first season began in July this year. The season is split into two parts - Apertura and Clausura - of identical format, and within each of those the 16 teams are split into two groups of eight, ending in a four-team play-off series of semi-finals and final.

In men's football in Mexico, low wages at the smallest clubs are, anecdotally, around 25,000 Mexican pesos per month, or about £1,000 per month. At the higher end of the scale, leading players earn anything from £4,000 a month to £40,000 a month, or up to half a million pounds a year. The top few players (emphasis few) can make more than £1m. The league-wide men's average is about £265,000 per year.

The salary cap for the women's league was set at 2,500 pesos per month, or £100 per month, or £1,200 per year.



THE BOTTOM LINE

The tiny cap limit was viewed in many quarters as risible, and indeed unworkable - with such low pay unable to attract players. Our survey suggests that the best paid women players are earning 'as much' as £800 a month, and that the average is something closer to 3,500 peso per month, or £140, or £1,679 a year.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

Women's professional (and semi-professional) football is starting to take off in multiple places. Colombia also had an inaugural 'pro' league in 2017, featuring 18 teams. As in Mexico it has faced teething problems, not least over money, and whether all the players are receiving even the relatively small sums due. We were unable to engage anyone involved in the Colombian league, or players' union, to discover more. If nothing else, league start-ups indicate women's football is evolving, however slowly.

SEVEN CONCLUSIONS

1: The WNBA is the only women's league where team-by-team average salaries are included in the main GSSS survey list. They are included because we have official numbers. For most of the other women's leagues we have a good idea of numbers for many individual clubs, but not all. So they cannot be listed in the same way. The WNBA is also included in the main because, as the best paid women's sports league in the world, it is a pertinent example to hold up against men's leagues to illustrate the gap. No WNBA team is higher than No327 on our list of 348 teams by average earnings. Upshot: we knew there was a pay divide and probably a big one. But the gender gap in team sport pay is now precisely, quantifiably massive.

2: The biggest and richest men's sports don't pay their way - or rather pay their wages - via fans coming to games; they often rely on huge TV contracts to underpin them as viable. Women's leagues on the contrary don't have huge TV contracts (generally) and so have to pay their way via other means. We provide a small insight into this via a new feature in this edition of the GSSS where we consider how easily leagues would pay their player wages if they relied only on the tickets they sold to games.

You can find those calculations for each league in the league-by-league analysis section of the main report's 18 leagues - which includes WNBA analysis. In the NFL in America, for example, first-team players are earning more than £3.5 billion in wages this season, and it is expected the league will sell between 17.5m and 18m tickets for all their games combined. (It was 17.8m last season). If those paying customers had to foot the wage bill, every single ticket would cost £198.07. Those tickets don't foot the wage bill, of course; huge TV deals do, in the main.

When we do the maths for the WBNA, using a total player salary bill of £8.2m in 2017, and 1,574,078 paying fans through the door, that works out at just £5.26 per ticket needed to pay those wages. An argument is often made along the lines: 'Women's sport is rubbish, nobody watches, so there isn't much money, no wonder wages are so small.'

Actually average 'lowest priced' ticket prices in the WBNA are more than double the sum needed to cover the wages, or more than £12 each. And the teams have other income streams from TV and sponsors. So they could arguably afford to pay higher wages than they do - but that's a whole different subject.

A more obvious conclusion around income streams is that building crowds is hugely important for women's leagues, first as that key step to build the revenue that pays wages, but also as marker that there is an audience there that might translate into a TV audience, which in turn might start to bring the bigger money for more significant growth.

3: There is an important role for governing bodies in promoting change. The most obvious example is found in Cricket Australia and their decision to put gender equality explicitly on the agenda and back it with cash. It's nascent, yes, but the culture of professionalism in women's cricket is blossoming in Australia because the organisation that holds the purse has decided to start being fairer. Imagine, just for a second, that football world governing body FIFA decided to take its massive income (derived from men's football, and women's football, albeit unequally) and then spend it equally, on men's football and women's football. Imagine if it did that because it is a not-for-profit responsible for all of football, not just men's football. To use just one example, FIFA's prize pot for the 2015 women's World Cup was \$15m. For next year's men's World Cup in Russia it will be \$400m. Of course that men's prize money goes to national associations and some of them will spend some of it on women's football, although most will go to men. Imagine if FIFA decided instead to make the prize funds to each of the World Cups \$200m, and then stipulate that the money split at the women's event is spent on women's football. It is within their power, if they have the political will to make that leap. The same goes for any governing body.

4: There is an important role for governing bodies in not preventing positive change by bodies they see as rivals to their power. The most obvious examples come when commercial promoters (say, at random, in a short-form cricket event) might offer platforms for paid work but governing bodies (say with their own short-form event, or plans for one) put barriers in place that prevent 'their' players taking advantage. If global and national governing bodies in whatever sports you can name - football, cricket, cycling, athletics, whatever - are not investing in opportunities for women to pursue professional careers, they at least should not stand in the way of others who are. We accept this is an area fraught with political complications.

5: The AFL women's league appears to be showing the way in terms of full integration for men's and women's team that function on an equal basis (pay aside, for now) within one sporting organisation. The large crowds for the women's season in 2017 appear to be evidence that the 'one club' mentality has drawn in lots of supporters from the men's teams. Sport is tribal, and team sport especially so. In developing professional women's team sport, organisations need to tap into that. Put the the women's teams on a genuinely equal footing, with facilities, opportunities, and venues, and see what that does for you.

6: The sporting arenas, and the media coverage that events attract, do both matter. There is probably no better example of top-level professional sporting equality than that on display at the tennis Grand Slam events. The men and women compete alongside each other on the same courts, for the same money, in the same championships, during a fortnight of play in each of Melbourne, Paris, Wimbledon and New York. Media coverage of those events, on TV, radio, social media and old-fashioned newspapers is fundamentally equal. Certainly it is much more equal than most sports. That isn't to say that moving women's team sport into men's stadiums and arenas is necessarily going to be a magic bullet. But a change of attitude cannot hurt.

7: We focus on team sport in this report, but individual sports also have a gender divide in earnings potential. We can look to tennis as the most demonstrably 'equal' among 'major' sports, played worldwide, where the top players share the same spaces and money on the same stages for eight weeks each year. The number of male players with on-court earnings of \$250,000 or more in the calendar year of 2017 was 150 players; while the number of women was 129. That's 16 per cent more men than women making that quarter of a million dollars or more.

Moving to specific earnings, the top 20 men's players (in prize money) earned a total of \$75.3m or an average of \$3.76m as the top 20 women's players earned \$64.5m or an average of \$3.2m. The top 20 men are earning 16.6 per cent more each, on average, than the top 20 women.

Within the top 50, the men collectively earned \$115m versus \$96.6m at an average of \$2.3m versus \$1.9m for the women - or 19 per cent more.

Within the top 100, the men collectively earned \$149.6m versus \$120.9m at an average of almost \$1.5m versus \$1.2m for the women - or 24 per cent more.

So even in this even sport, relatively, there are more men making money, and also more money, even when, at their major events, they are sharing the same arenas for the same pay.

That isn't to criticise tennis - far from it. It's a leader in equality terms in sport. But as we noted in conclusion one, a gap remains, demonstrably.

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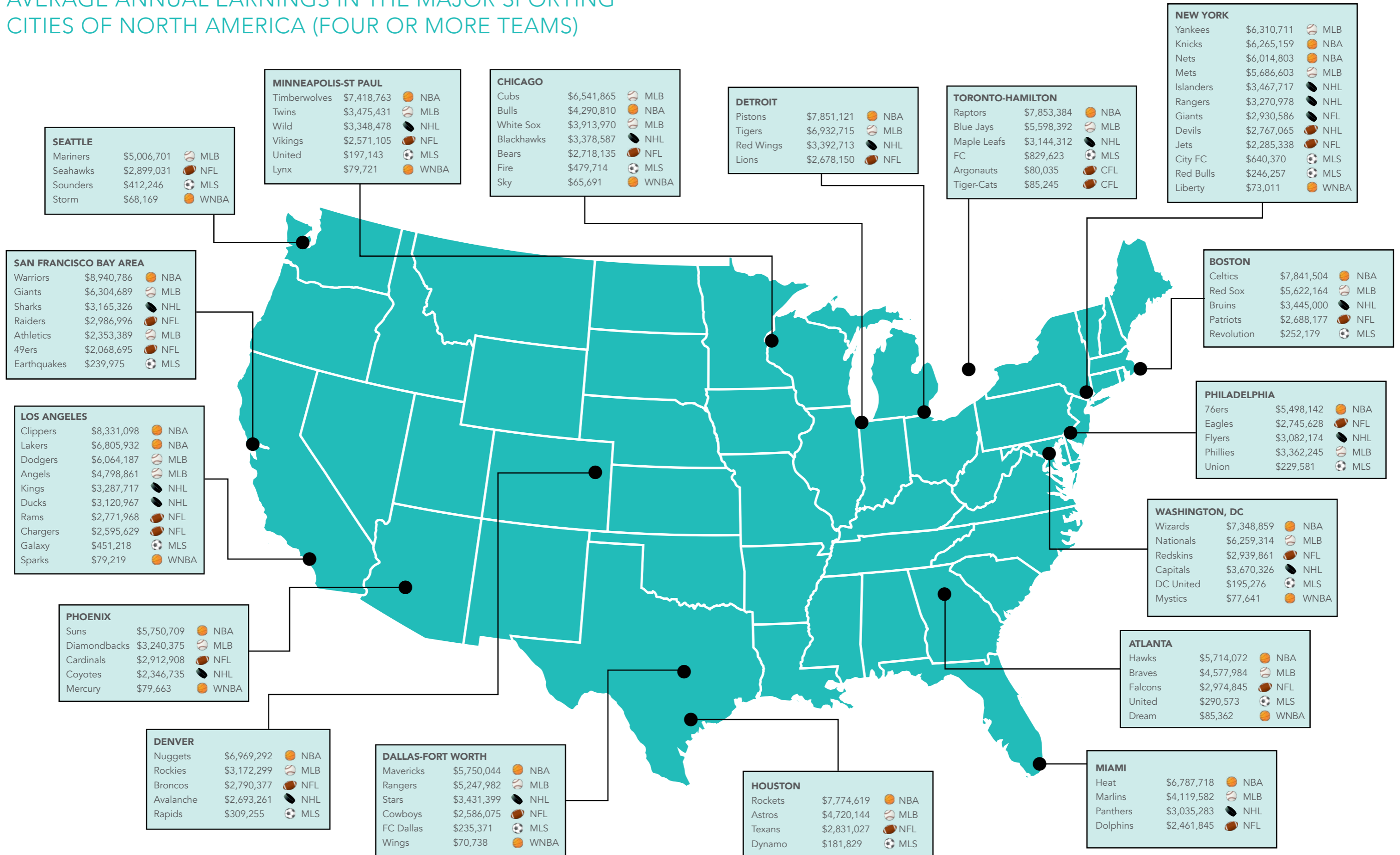


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“Oklahoma went from being the major professional sporting attraction in their city to the best paid sports team the world has known.”

GLOBAL SPORTS SALARIES SURVEY 2017: OKLAHOMA RISE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD

LAST YEAR's survey was all about Brexit, the subsequent currency fluctuations it caused and a huge new TV deal in the NBA. They combined to take a wrecking ball to the established order of the world's best paid sports teams. This year we've focussed on gender equality (or rather inequality) as we've added a women's league, the WNBA, to our main list for the first time. That list, after further big pay increases in the NBA, is ever more dominated by basketball teams using our unique metric of 'average first-team pay', or in other words, the average annual salary of the first-team squad players, effectively but not always the 'active roster'. Squad make-up rules vary across sports and leagues.

This allows us to compare salaries in hugely contrasting leagues in multiple sports around the world. It is no surprise really that an NBA team is top, again, although the identity of the team - Oklahoma City Thunder - won't be familiar to many who don't follow basketball.

They overtake last year's No1, the Cleveland Cavaliers, and the story of how they stormed up the pay list from No33 last year to the top of pile is a tale of giants.

One all-time giant NBA contract is involved, and two giant signings,

and two giant pay rises, one to a player from a family of giants. At the start of last season, the Thunder were ranked only 23rd just among the 30 NBA teams in average pay, with their 15 players collectively earning \$90m, or \$6m each (£4.5m).

By opening day 2017, and this edition of the survey, their 14-man roster had collective annual salaries of \$130m, or \$9.3m each (£7.15m).

The all-time giant contract has been signed by guard Russell Westbrook, the NBA's leading scorer and MVP last season. He penned a \$205m five-year contract extension last year. It actually kicks in from the start of next season, but it delivers the biggest guaranteed deal in NBA history, or \$233m over six seasons to 2023. He nonetheless has a 'minor' pay rise to include in this study, of \$2m between last season's \$26.5m and this season's \$28.5m.

The giant signings (in sporting achievement terms) were Carmelo Anthony from the New York Knicks and Paul George from the Indiana Pacers. George is a four-time NBA All-Star, and arrived with a pay packet of \$19.5m for this season. Anthony has been an All-Star 10 times, been a member of the USA Olympic basketball a

record four times, and has won four Olympic medals, bronze in 2004 and then golds in 2008, 2012 and 2016. He's earning \$26m this season.

One of the giant pay rises went to André Roberson, who re-signed with the Thunder on a three-year \$30m contract in the summer, taking his pay from \$2m in 2016-17 to \$9m this season.

Without doubt our favourite character in this story is Steven Adams, a laid-back guitar-playing Kiwi with Anglo-Tongan heritage. His late mother, Lilika Ngauamo, was from the Polynesian islands, and his father, Sid, was an English sailor who settled in New Zealand after a career in the Royal Navy. Sid had 18 children with five different women and 7ft Adams is the youngest. His siblings are exceptionally tall, and athletic, his brothers and half-brothers averaging 6ft 9in (two of them basketball players in New Zealand) and his sisters averaging 6ft. One of his sisters is Valerie Adams, twice an Olympic gold medallist in the shot putt, at Beijing 2008 and London 2012, before a silver at Rio 2016. She is also a four-time world champion, in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013, before a silver in 2015. And as of the New Years Honours, 2017, Valerie is a Dame.

Back to Steven and his role in this story, he signed a four-year, \$100m contract extension with the Thunder late last year, pushing his \$3m salary from the last GSSS to \$22m for the current season. And that combination of events explains how the only 'big' sports franchise in the state of Oklahoma went from being the major professional sporting attraction in their city to the best paid sports team the world has known.

At No2 this year are last year's leaders, the Cavaliers, followed by a third NBA team, the Golden State Warriors at No3. The Warriors rise from No20 last year after new contracts (finally) kicked in for their major players including Steph Curry.

The NBA's dominance is reaching the point where they are close to annexing the top 20. Only three teams from outside the NBA get into that bracket: Barcelona of La Liga at No4 overall, up from No5 last year, PSG of Ligue 1 at No5 overall, up from No35 last year after the jaw-dropping capture of world record signing Neymar in the summer, and Real Madrid at No 9, up from No19 last year, largely down to big new contracts for star players.

The only other non-NBA teams in the top 30 are baseball's Detroit Tigers at No22 (the highest ranked MLB team), and then two Premier League clubs from Manchester at No23 and No24 (United and City, in that order, just), with Bayern Munich of the Bundesliga at No27, and baseball's Chicago Cubs at No28. The full rundown of teams plus league-by-league analysis is included in this report.

As recently as the GSSS edition of 2015, eight football (soccer) teams were in the top 10.

CURRENCY NOTES

The GSSS typically takes a currency conversion rate for each edition at mid-year for all currencies. Last year, given the impact of Brexit, we used exchange rates applicable on the Monday after the vote, the last Monday in June 2016, when £1 was trading at \$1.32 and \$1 was 75.76 pence. The pound-euro conversion rates used were £1 = €1.22, or €1 = 82p.

This year the rates used are £1 = US\$1.30 and £1 = €1.12. Given the prevalence of Australian leagues in the women's sports analysis, we should note we used the mid-year figure of £1 = A\$1.688, and staying in women's sport, and specifically Danish handball, we used a rate of £1 = DKK8.373. If a salary has been paid in US dollars, that figure is reported in dollars, and also converted to pounds. If a salary was paid in euros, we converted to pounds, then US dollars; and the same is the case for Australian dollars. We mention this simply because, in previous years, figures have been taken from the report and converted into other currencies at the publication day's rate, then been picked up and converted again. Amounts can change quickly and significantly from their original state. Such is the effect of currency fluctuations.

With that headache-inducing but essential digression out of the way, we can move on.

CHINA'S RISE, AND STUMBLE'

Last year's report was notable for the rise of the Chinese Super League and our floating of the notion that massive investment in football was all part of a plan to land the 2030 World Cup. It might

still happen but as the CSL analysis later in the report highlights, the government via the Chinese FA have tried to put the brakes on spending. It has had limited effect so far, with the best paid CSL team this year, according to our survey, being Shanghai SIPG with average player pay of £1.85m a year. That is bigger than the vast majority of clubs in Spain's La Liga, Germany's Bundesliga, Italy's Serie A and France's Ligue 1.

Chinese investors have continued to buy stakes or majority shares in European clubs, Southampton of the Premier League among them in August 2017. Chinese interests own or part-own the Premier League's Manchester City and West Brom, Championship clubs Aston Villa, Birmingham and Wolves, La Liga clubs Espanyol and Granada, and the two Italian giants Milan and Inter, among others. But some of those investments at least have question marks ballooning over them, not least in Milan, while the march of the CSL could look different again by this time next year.

GSSS 2017 - A SURVEY FOR TODAY

We reiterate this each year to provide context and explain how this report has evolved: Sporting Intelligence's global sports salaries survey was conceived in 2009 with several aims, one of them being to produce a substantial piece of original research to help promote the full launch of www.sportingintelligence.com in early 2010.

The idea was to compare, on a like-for-like basis as closely as possible, how much 'average' sportsmen earned at hundreds of different clubs and teams around

the world in hugely contrasting professional sports. This would also allow us to examine the relationship between money and success in each sport.

To reflect global and not just western patterns, we needed to look beyond one or two 'hotspots' in European football and major North American sport. So the starting point for the first survey was considering the most popular domestic professional sports leagues - measured by average ticket-buying attendance per game - and included not only the NFL, the Premier League and other 'major' leagues but also Indian Premier League cricket and Japanese baseball.

Subsequent reports have expanded to add Australian Rules football and Canadian CFL gridiron, then Chinese Super League football, Japanese J-League football and Ligue 1 from France. As and when reliable numbers can be sourced for new or growing leagues, we'll be happy to include them, and welcome any assistance in obtaining such data.

One important note needs to be made on methodology. The first six editions of this report were released in Spring, usually April, and included salaries for the 'active' or most recently completed season for each league at the time of publication. For the European football leagues until last year's report, completed seasons were used. But more experience, a wider knowledge base, and more established access to more data (better sourcing) gave us the confidence to use 'live' data for all the European football leagues in the

2016, and again this year.

As ever, these particular football numbers can only be a snapshot, of the situation applicable to the squads as set between the end of the summer 2017 transfer window and the opening of the January 2017 window. But nonetheless we believe they are the most accurate snapshot available anywhere.

The only other methodological note to make is some clubs' salaries - the successful clubs - will be a good few percentage points higher than the stated figures when performance-related bonuses are paid. We cannot know at the time of writing which those clubs will be!

All figures (across all leagues) are sourced directly or indirectly from one or more of unions, player associations, agents, leagues, clubs and other reliable administrative bodies.

To be more specific, league by league, the NBA numbers are in the public domain, so too the MLB figures and IPL figures (via auctions, with league and club sources filling gaps). For the Premier League, and all the European leagues (in Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Scotland) we source a specific number for each and every individual player wherever possible, either from players themselves, their agents or other representatives, or club sources. It is a painstaking exercise and the findings can, by a survey definition, only be as accurate as the information provided. There are 'backstops' however, or public record sources (some but not all widely known) that give a good indication of the general

financial situation at a club. We cross-reference with those. For the first few GSSS surveys, for some leagues, the 'backstops' were the key source material, then ratified. The NHL numbers come direct from the players' union, the NFL figures are in the public domain, as are, in Japan, the figures for both Japanese leagues (NPB and J-League). The CSL is intriguing. We obtained official internal numbers a few years ago and have tracked the significant changes since on a player by player basis. But the league-wide situation is at best opaque. The analysis section for the CSL explains the revelatory nature of Evergrande's latest annual report, and the possibility that pay in China might be even bigger than we think.

The MLS numbers are from the players' union, made public to the last cent twice a year, and the union should be applauded for that. The AFL numbers come from various sources in Australia and take more time to pull together, hence the 'accounting lag'; and the same is true of Canada's CFL (except sources in Canada). The WNBA figures are official numbers, sourced from those who see the data, and we thank them for that.

GSSS FOR THE FUTURE - AN APPEAL

Just as we would welcome data for new leagues, mentioned earlier (South America would be intriguing, please), we remain interested in adding any other leagues of significance to a wide audience, either because of international reach or something that league can tell us about competitive balance and money. Suggestions are welcome. Rugby (both codes) and the Olympic

team sports of water polo and volleyball would be interesting, if you are a senior administrator in one of those sports and want to get in touch.

Last year we said women's professional sports leagues were of particular interest; this year's report is the result of the feedback and help that appeal produced.

GSSS - THE METRIC EXPLAINED

The key metric in the GSSS has always been 'average first-team pay'. It sounds simple but to stay true to our like-for-like target requires a range of decisions about what to include. What does 'first team' constitute at a football club? In the NBA? In Japanese baseball?

Typically, a first-team squad in football will be 25 players although it may be as few as 20 and it may be more than 30. It depends on the team. Similar numbers of players per 'first-team squad' are used for the two baseball leagues included - MLB and NPB - and for the ice hockey league, the NHL. In NBA basketball, the salaries of the 15 to 17 players on each roster on the opening day of the 2017-18 season were considered. In Canadian and Australian football the wages of some 40-plus players are counted per team and in the NFL it is more than 50 per team.

By 'average', we mean 'arithmetic mean'. All the salaries are added up (and by salaries, we include money for playing sport for that team, not for endorsements or sponsorship or anything else extra-curricular) and divided by the number of players. That's it. A simple list that provokes complicated arguments but does, at the very least, provide a 'ball

park' reckoner of what different sports teams pay.

Average pay is important - as opposed to total wage outlay - because two teams spending the same totals on salaries will have starkly different averages if they are paying a significantly different number of players.

It happens, and it matters. You can employ a higher number of lower quality players for the same price as a smaller number of higher quality players, and we think it's worth exploring which is most effective for performance.

Arguably one of the most counter-intuitive findings in our reports has been the relatively low levels of average salaries in America's NFL - by far and away the richest sport in the world in terms of annual domestic TV contract earnings, often the bedrock of a league's income.

NFL players earn just over \$2.7m a year each on average, or more than \$4m less per man than NBA basketball players this season. The 'median' earnings in the NFL, where you consider the middle person in a list of all players ranked from best-paid to worst-paid, has only just crept above a million dollars a year.

The best paid NFL team in this year's survey, the Oakland Raiders, do not appear on the overall list in the top 100 places (they are No108), with the average player there earning £2.3m a year (\$3m). It has been argued by some sports fans, usually in North America, that pay-per-man is irrelevant because it is total outlay that matters. Well, not a single NFL team gets into the top 10 list of total payroll size. The

Raiders are No18. The top six teams in this regard - combined basic salaries of the first-team players - are Barcelona, PSG, Real Madrid, the LA Dodgers, Manchester United and the Detroit Tigers.

NBA STRETCH LEAD AS RICHEST LEAGUE

The NBA remains comfortably the top paying league as a whole in world sport, by average salary at £5.5m or \$7.1m. The details on how many teams and players are considered for each league are in the league-by-league analysis pages, as are the average salaries and median numbers.

The Premier League is the highest paying football league in the world, at £2.64m per player per season. This means the average weekly pay in the Premier League has risen above £50,000 per week for the first time.

In most leagues, money matters when it comes to performance; the more you pay, the better you do, all other things being equal. That is particularly true in elite football leagues but also true in the NBA and in MLB. The reason is fairly straightforward - better players cost more, and if you're spending more it's generally because you have better players.

The 18 leagues and 348 teams we consider in the main list start with the 'big four' from American sports, which are the NFL (gridiron, American football), the NBA (basketball), MLB (baseball) and NHL (ice hockey), continue with the 'big five' football leagues of Europe, which are the English Premier League (EPL), the Bundesliga of Germany, La Liga of Spain, Serie A of Italy and Ligue 1 of France, and include the AFL from Australia, CFL football (gridiron) from Canada, NPB

baseball from Japan and IPL from India. The leagues have led the way in attracting the biggest crowds in world sport over the past decade, as measured by average attendance within domestic professional sports leagues.

Our final five leagues are the Scottish Premiership from Scotland, MLS from North America, China's CSL and Japan's J-League - all as examples of smaller-scale leagues from the world's most popular sport, football - and the WNBA, the first women's league in the GSSS. For the NBA, the NHL and the NFL, the numbers in this report pertain to the 2017-18 seasons. For the Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, Serie A, Ligue 1 and Scottish Premiership, the salaries are for the squads at the end of the 2017 transfer window as the 2017-18 season began. For MLB, MLS, IPL, NPB, CSL, J.League and WNBA the numbers are for 2017, and for the AFL and CFL they come from the end of the 2016 seasons.

We thank everyone who assisted with helping us to find the most reliable data possible. The uniqueness of this study lies in looking beyond total payrolls or club wage bills to what the players make per head.

Details and links to information about previous years' GSSS reports can be found via www.globalsportssalaries.com.

Thank you for reading.
Nick Harris
Editor
Sporting Intelligence
November 2017



GLOBAL SPORTS SALARIES SURVEY 2017: TOP 12

RANK & TEAM (LAST YEAR)	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
  1 (33) Oklahoma City Thunder	NBA	£7,150,388 (£137,507)	\$9,295,504 (\$178,760)
  2 (1) Cleveland Cavaliers	NBA	£6,919,714 (£133,071)	\$8,995,628 (\$172,993)
  3 (20) Golden State Warriors	NBA	£6,877,528 (£132,260)	\$8,940,786 (\$171,938)
  4 (5) Barcelona	La Liga	£6,597,500 (£126,875)	\$8,576,750 (\$164,938)
  5 (35) PSG	Ligue 1	£6,472,355 (£124,468)	\$8,414,061 (\$161,809)
  6 (21) Charlotte Hornets	NBA	£6,445,974 (£123,961)	\$8,379,766 (\$161,149)
  7 (6) Portland Trail Blazers	NBA	£6,434,440 (£123,739)	\$8,364,772 (\$160,861)
  8 (3) LA Clippers	NBA	£6,408,537 (£123,241)	\$8,331,098 (\$160,213)
  9 (19) Real Madrid	La Liga	£6,224,833 (£119,708)	\$8,092,283 (\$155,621)
  10 (25) New Orleans Pelicans	NBA	£6,063,867 (£116,613)	\$7,883,028 (\$151,597)
  11 (11) Toronto Raptors	NBA	£6,041,065 (£116,174)	\$7,853,384 (\$151,027)
  12 (17) Detroit Pistons	NBA	£6,039,324 (£116,141)	\$7,851,121 (\$150,983)

13-57

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
13 (32)	Boston Celtics	NBA	£6,031,926 (£115,999)	\$7,841,504 (\$150,798)
14 (29)	Houston Rockets	NBA	£5,980,476 (£115,009)	\$7,774,619 (\$149,512)
15 (23)	Milwaukee Bucks	NBA	£5,873,909 (£112,960)	\$7,636,082 (\$146,848)
16 (12)	San Antonio Spurs	NBA	£5,807,031 (£111,674)	\$7,549,140 (\$145,176)
17 (49)	Minnesota Timberwolves	NBA	£5,706,740 (£109,745)	\$7,418,763 (\$142,669)
18 (15)	Washington Wizards	NBA	£5,652,968 (£108,711)	\$7,348,859 (\$141,324)
19 (39)	Utah Jazz	NBA	£5,645,592 (£108,569)	\$7,339,269 (\$141,140)
20 (7)	Memphis Grizzlies	NBA	£5,586,599 (£107,435)	\$7,262,578 (\$139,665)
21 (46)	Denver Nuggets	NBA	£5,360,994 (£103,096)	\$6,969,292 (\$134,025)
22 (28)	Detroit Tigers	MLB	£5,332,858 (£102,555)	\$6,932,715 (\$133,321)
23 (4)	Man Utd	EPL	£5,241,185 (£100,792)	\$6,813,541 (\$131,030)
24 (9)	Man City	EPL	£5,235,917 (£100,691)	\$6,806,692 (\$130,898)
25 (31)	Los Angeles Lakers	NBA	£5,235,333 (£100,679)	\$6,805,932 (\$130,883)
26 (18)	Miami Heat	NBA	£5,221,321 (£100,410)	\$6,787,718 (\$130,533)
27 (37)	Bayern Munich	Bundesliga	£5,184,038 (£99,693)	\$6,739,250 (\$129,601)
28 (44)	Chicago Cubs	MLB	£5,032,204 (£96,773)	\$6,541,865 (\$125,805)
29 (10)	Orlando Magic	NBA	£5,027,759 (£96,688)	\$6,536,087 (\$125,694)
30 (36)	Indiana Pacers	NBA	£4,980,303 (£95,775)	\$6,474,394 (\$124,508)
31 (2)	New York Yankees	MLB	£4,854,393 (£93,354)	\$6,310,711 (\$121,360)
32 (41)	Juventus	Serie A	£4,853,467 (£93,336)	\$6,309,507 (\$121,337)
33 (13)	San Francisco Giants	MLB	£4,849,760 (£93,265)	\$6,304,689 (\$121,244)
34 (16)	New York Knicks	NBA	£4,819,353 (£92,680)	\$6,265,159 (\$120,484)
35 (38)	Washington Nationals	MLB	£4,814,857 (£92,593)	\$6,259,314 (\$120,371)
36 (26)	LA Dodgers	MLB	£4,664,760 (£89,707)	\$6,064,187 (\$116,619)
37 (53)	Brooklyn Nets	NBA	£4,626,771 (£88,976)	\$6,014,803 (\$115,669)
38 (27)	Sacramento Kings	NBA	£4,545,112 (£87,406)	\$5,908,646 (\$113,628)
39 (34)	Chelsea	EPL	£4,451,200 (£85,600)	\$5,786,560 (\$111,280)
40 (43)	Baltimore Orioles	MLB	£4,441,873 (£85,421)	\$5,774,435 (\$111,047)
41 (42)	Phoenix Suns	NBA	£4,423,622 (£85,070)	\$5,750,709 (\$110,591)
42 (8)	Dallas Mavericks	NBA	£4,423,111 (£85,060)	\$5,750,044 (\$110,578)
43 (22)	Atlanta Hawks	NBA	£4,395,440 (£84,528)	\$5,714,072 (\$109,886)
44 (45)	New York Mets	MLB	£4,374,310 (£84,121)	\$5,686,603 (\$109,358)
45 (24)	Boston Red Sox	MLB	£4,324,742 (£83,168)	\$5,622,164 (\$108,119)
46 (50)	Toronto Blue Jays	MLB	£4,306,455 (£82,816)	\$5,598,392 (\$107,661)
47 (63)	Philadelphia 76ers	NBA	£4,229,340 (£81,333)	\$5,498,142 (\$105,733)
48 (47)	Arsenal	EPL	£4,037,222 (£77,639)	\$5,248,389 (\$100,931)
49 (30)	Texas Rangers	MLB	£4,036,909 (£77,633)	\$5,247,982 (\$100,923)
50 (51)	Royal Challengers Bangalore	IPL	£4,022,500 (£77,356)	\$5,229,250 (\$100,563)
51 (48)	Seattle Mariners	MLB	£3,851,308 (£74,064)	\$5,006,701 (\$96,283)
52 (68)	Atletico Madrid	La Liga	£3,849,130 (£74,022)	\$5,003,870 (\$96,228)
53 (52)	St Louis Cardinals	MLB	£3,759,744 (£72,303)	\$4,887,667 (\$93,994)
54 (40)	LA Angels	MLB	£3,691,432 (£70,989)	\$4,798,861 (\$92,286)
55 (60)	Liverpool	EPL	£3,649,862 (£70,190)	\$4,744,821 (\$91,247)
56 (71)	Houston Astros	MLB	£3,630,880 (£69,825)	\$4,720,144 (\$90,772)
57 (54)	Kansas City Royals	MLB	£3,628,899 (£69,787)	\$4,717,568 (\$90,722)

58-106

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
58 (145)	Atlanta Braves	MLB	£3,521,526 (£67,722)	\$4,577,984 (\$88,038)
59 (57)	Rising Pune Supergiants	IPL	£3,430,952 (£65,980)	\$4,460,238 (\$85,774)
60 (14)	Chicago Bulls	NBA	£3,300,623 (£63,474)	\$4,290,810 (\$82,516)
61 (108)	Cleveland Indians	MLB	£3,186,570 (£61,280)	\$4,142,542 (\$79,664)
62 (107)	Miami Marlins	MLB	£3,168,909 (£60,941)	\$4,119,582 (\$79,223)
63 (56)	Mumbai Indians	IPL	£3,164,286 (£60,852)	\$4,113,571 (\$79,107)
64 (66)	Tottenham	EPL	£3,154,667 (£60,667)	\$4,101,067 (\$78,867)
65 (132)	Milan	Serie A	£3,135,877 (£60,305)	\$4,076,640 (\$78,397)
66 (55)	Chicago White Sox	MLB	£3,010,746 (£57,899)	\$3,913,970 (\$75,269)
67 (59)	Sunrisers Hyderabad	IPL	£2,990,119 (£57,502)	\$3,887,155 (\$74,753)
68 (72)	Kolkata Knight Riders	IPL	£2,951,667 (£56,763)	\$3,837,167 (\$73,792)
69 (61)	Delhi Daredevils	IPL	£2,938,214 (£56,504)	\$3,819,679 (\$73,455)
70 (90)	West Ham	EPL	£2,936,870 (£56,478)	\$3,817,930 (\$73,422)
71 (70)	Washington Capitals	NHL	£2,823,328 (£54,295)	\$3,670,326 (\$70,583)
72 (101)	Everton	EPL	£2,806,207 (£53,966)	\$3,648,069 (\$70,155)
73 (65)	Pittsburgh Pirates	MLB	£2,799,936 (£53,845)	\$3,639,917 (\$69,998)
74 (111)	Borussia Dortmund	Bundesliga	£2,739,148 (£52,676)	\$3,560,893 (\$68,479)
75 (58)	Minnesota Twins	MLB	£2,673,408 (£51,412)	\$3,475,431 (\$66,835)
76 (92)	New York Islanders	NHL	£2,667,475 (£51,298)	\$3,467,717 (\$66,687)
77 (87)	Boston Bruins	NHL	£2,650,000 (£50,962)	\$3,445,000 (\$66,250)
78 (112)	Dallas Stars	NHL	£2,639,538 (£50,760)	\$3,431,399 (\$65,988)
79 (77)	Internazionale	Serie A	£2,637,754 (£50,726)	\$3,429,080 (\$65,944)
80 (85)	Detroit Red Wings	NHL	£2,609,779 (£50,188)	\$3,392,713 (\$65,244)
81 (78)	Chicago Blackhawks	NHL	£2,598,913 (£49,979)	\$3,378,587 (\$64,973)
82 (62)	Roma	Serie A	£2,598,580 (£49,973)	\$3,378,154 (\$64,965)
83 (73)	Pittsburgh Penguins	NHL	£2,596,916 (£49,941)	\$3,375,991 (\$64,923)
84 (104)	Philadelphia Phillies	MLB	£2,586,343 (£49,737)	\$3,362,245 (\$64,659)
85 (81)	Minnesota Wild	NHL	£2,575,753 (£49,534)	\$3,348,478 (\$64,394)
86 (83)	St Louis Blues	NHL	£2,559,030 (£49,212)	\$3,326,739 (\$63,976)
87 (67)	Los Angeles Kings	NHL	£2,529,013 (£48,635)	\$3,287,717 (\$63,225)
88 (79)	New York Rangers	NHL	£2,516,137 (£48,387)	\$3,270,978 (\$62,903)
89 (105)	Leicester	EPL	£2,499,120 (£48,060)	\$3,248,856 (\$62,478)
90 (94)	Vancouver Canucks	NHL	£2,492,893 (£47,940)	\$3,240,761 (\$62,322)
91 (75)	Arizona Diamondbacks	MLB	£2,492,596 (£47,935)	\$3,240,375 (\$62,315)
92 (74)	Montreal Canadiens	NHL	£2,488,040 (£47,847)	\$3,234,452 (\$62,201)
93 (84)	Calgary Flames	NHL	£2,451,923 (£47,152)	\$3,187,500 (\$61,298)
94 (69)	Colorado Rockies	MLB	£2,440,230 (£46,928)	\$3,172,299 (\$61,006)
95 (76)	San Jose Sharks	NHL	£2,434,866 (£46,824)	\$3,165,326 (\$60,872)
96 (144)	Valencia	La Liga	£2,429,818 (£46,727)	\$3,158,764 (\$60,745)
97 (88)	Tampa Bay Lightning	NHL	£2,421,990 (£46,577)	\$3,148,587 (\$60,550)
98 (137)	Toronto Maple Leafs	NHL	£2,418,701 (£46,513)	\$3,144,312 (\$60,468)
99 (120)	Napoli	Serie A	£2,414,867 (£46,440)	\$3,139,327 (\$60,372)
100 (93)	Anaheim Ducks	NHL	£2,400,744 (£46,168)	\$3,120,967 (\$60,019)
101 (91)	Buffalo Sabres	NHL	£2,398,227 (£46,120)	\$3,117,696 (\$59,956)
102 (86)	Nashville Predators	NHL	£2,375,418 (£45,681)	\$3,088,043 (\$59,385)
103 (89)	Philadelphia Flyers	NHL	£2,370,903 (£45,594)	\$3,082,174 (\$59,273)
104 (154)	Sevilla	La Liga	£2,343,490 (£45,067)	\$3,046,537 (\$58,587)
105 (115)	Florida Panthers	NHL	£2,334,833 (£44,901)	\$3,035,283 (\$58,371)
106 (95)	Ottawa Senators	NHL	£2,334,448 (£44,893)	\$3,034,783 (\$58,361)

107-155

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
107 (80)	Gujarat Lions	IPL	£2,332,203 (£44,850)	\$3,031,863 (\$58,305)
108 (100)	Oakland Raiders	NFL	£2,297,689 (£44,186)	\$2,986,996 (\$57,442)
109 (138)	Atlanta Falcons	NFL	£2,288,342 (£44,007)	\$2,974,845 (\$57,209)
110 (109)	Southampton	EPL	£2,271,286 (£43,679)	\$2,952,671 (\$56,782)
111 (130)	Washington Redskins	NFL	£2,261,432 (£43,489)	\$2,939,861 (\$56,536)
112 (141)	Carolina Panthers	NFL	£2,256,303 (£43,390)	\$2,933,194 (\$56,408)
113 (121)	New York Giants	NFL	£2,254,297 (£43,352)	\$2,930,586 (\$56,357)
114 (118)	Crystal Palace	EPL	£2,250,857 (£43,286)	\$2,926,114 (\$56,271)
115 (103)	Arizona Cardinals	NFL	£2,240,698 (£43,090)	\$2,912,908 (\$56,017)
116 (119)	Seattle Seahawks	NFL	£2,230,023 (£42,885)	\$2,899,031 (\$55,751)
117 (110)	Jacksonville Jaguars	NFL	£2,226,583 (£42,819)	\$2,894,558 (\$55,665)
118 (146)	Kansas City Chiefs	NFL	£2,226,583 (£42,819)	\$2,894,558 (\$55,665)
119 (135)	West Brom	EPL	£2,221,304 (£42,717)	\$2,887,696 (\$55,533)
120 (124)	Winnipeg Jets	NHL	£2,207,871 (£42,459)	\$2,870,232 (\$55,197)
121 (128)	Pittsburgh Steelers	NFL	£2,206,011 (£42,423)	\$2,867,815 (\$55,150)
122 (129)	Tennessee Titans	NFL	£2,185,950 (£42,038)	\$2,841,735 (\$54,649)
123 (99)	Green Bay Packers	NFL	£2,177,713 (£41,879)	\$2,831,027 (\$54,443)
124 (116)	Houston Texans	NFL	£2,177,713 (£41,879)	\$2,831,027 (\$54,443)
125 (-)	Vegas Golden Knights	NHL	£2,163,907 (£41,614)	\$2,813,080 (\$54,098)
126 (82)	Kings XI Punjab	IPL	£2,158,155 (£41,503)	\$2,805,601 (\$53,954)
127 (134)	Denver Broncos	NFL	£2,146,444 (£41,278)	\$2,790,377 (\$53,661)
128 (117)	Edmonton Oilers	NHL	£2,143,227 (£41,216)	\$2,786,196 (\$53,581)
129 (133)	Los Angeles Rams	NFL	£2,132,283 (£41,005)	\$2,771,968 (\$53,307)
130 (152)	New Jersey Devils	NHL	£2,128,512 (£40,933)	\$2,767,065 (\$53,213)
131 (139)	Philadelphia Eagles	NFL	£2,112,022 (£40,616)	\$2,745,628 (\$52,801)
132 (148)	Chicago Bears	NFL	£2,090,873 (£40,209)	\$2,718,135 (\$52,272)
133 (98)	Colorado Avalanche	NHL	£2,071,739 (£39,841)	\$2,693,261 (\$51,793)
134 (159)	Monaco	Ligue 1	£2,067,929 (£39,768)	\$2,688,307 (\$51,698)
135 (156)	New England Patriots	NFL	£2,067,829 (£39,766)	\$2,688,177 (\$51,696)
136 (127)	Stoke	EPL	£2,064,400 (£39,700)	\$2,683,720 (\$51,610)
137 (140)	Detroit Lions	NFL	£2,060,116 (£39,618)	\$2,678,150 (\$51,503)
138 (114)	Tampa Bay Bucs	NFL	£2,053,874 (£39,498)	\$2,670,036 (\$51,347)
139 (102)	Columbus Blue Jackets	NHL	£2,051,839 (£39,458)	\$2,667,391 (\$51,296)
140 (96)	Cincinnati Reds	MLB	£2,044,064 (£39,309)	\$2,657,283 (\$51,102)
141 (106)	Cincinnati Bengals	NFL	£2,036,583 (£39,165)	\$2,647,558 (\$50,915)
142 (155)	Buffalo Bills	NFL	£2,027,868 (£38,997)	\$2,636,228 (\$50,697)
143 (143)	Los Angeles Chargers	NFL	£1,996,637 (£38,397)	\$2,595,629 (\$49,916)
144 (113)	Dallas Cowboys	NFL	£1,989,289 (£38,256)	\$2,586,075 (\$49,732)
145 (122)	Minnesota Vikings	NFL	£1,977,773 (£38,034)	\$2,571,105 (\$49,444)
146 (123)	Indianapolis Colts	NFL	£1,971,297 (£37,910)	\$2,562,686 (\$49,282)
147 (136)	Baltimore Ravens	NFL	£1,954,576 (£37,588)	\$2,540,949 (\$48,864)
148 (164)	New Orleans Saints	NFL	£1,945,983 (£37,423)	\$2,529,778 (\$48,650)
149 (153)	Carolina Hurricanes	NHL	£1,923,161 (£36,984)	\$2,500,109 (\$48,079)
150 (126)	Miami Dolphins	NFL	£1,893,727 (£36,418)	\$2,461,845 (\$47,343)
151 (161)	Shanghai SIPG	CSL	£1,853,942 (£35,653)	\$2,410,125 (\$46,349)
152 (97)	Oakland Athletics	MLB	£1,810,299 (£34,813)	\$2,353,389 (\$45,257)
153 (150)	Milwaukee Brewers	MLB	£1,805,328 (£34,718)	\$2,346,927 (\$45,133)
154 (147)	Arizona Coyotes	NHL	£1,805,181 (£34,715)	\$2,346,735 (\$45,130)
155 (149)	Wolfsburg	Bundesliga	£1,778,261 (£34,197)	\$2,311,740 (\$44,457)

156-204

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
156 (174)	Marseille	Ligue 1	£1,769,700 (£34,033)	\$2,300,610 (\$44,243)
157 (125)	New York Jets	NFL	£1,757,952 (£33,807)	\$2,285,338 (\$43,949)
158 (162)	Swansea	EPL	£1,712,880 (£32,940)	\$2,226,744 (\$42,822)
159 (-)	Newcastle	EPL	£1,710,222 (£32,889)	\$2,223,289 (\$42,756)
160 (158)	Tampa Bay Rays	MLB	£1,682,272 (£32,351)	\$2,186,954 (\$42,057)
161 (142)	Schalke	Bundesliga	£1,654,052 (£31,809)	\$2,150,268 (\$41,351)
162 (173)	Cleveland Browns	NFL	£1,644,663 (£31,628)	\$2,138,062 (\$41,117)
163 (-)	Tianjin Quanjian	CSL	£1,612,198 (£31,004)	\$2,095,857 (\$40,305)
164 (151)	San Francisco 49ers	NFL	£1,591,304 (£30,602)	\$2,068,695 (\$39,783)
165 (177)	Bournemouth	EPL	£1,577,333 (£30,333)	\$2,050,533 (\$39,433)
166 (176)	Hebei China Fortune	CSL	£1,551,731 (£29,841)	\$2,017,250 (\$38,793)
167 (163)	Bayer Leverkusen	Bundesliga	£1,518,400 (£29,200)	\$1,973,920 (\$37,960)
168 (172)	Lazio	Serie A	£1,488,278 (£28,621)	\$1,934,761 (\$37,207)
169 (157)	Watford	EPL	£1,457,857 (£28,036)	\$1,895,214 (\$36,446)
170 (169)	Athletic Bilbao	La Liga	£1,419,500 (£27,298)	\$1,845,350 (\$35,488)
171 (203)	Shanghai Shenua	CSL	£1,375,986 (£26,461)	\$1,788,781 (\$34,400)
172 (181)	Burnley	EPL	£1,371,500 (£26,375)	\$1,782,950 (\$34,288)
173 (168)	Lyon	Ligue 1	£1,354,704 (£26,052)	\$1,761,115 (\$33,868)
174 (-)	Brighton	EPL	£1,346,429 (£25,893)	\$1,750,357 (\$33,661)
175 (179)	Real Sociedad	La Liga	£1,335,750 (£25,688)	\$1,736,475 (\$33,394)
176 (167)	Villarreal	La Liga	£1,326,115 (£25,502)	\$1,723,950 (\$33,153)
177 (178)	Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks	NPB	£1,310,563 (£25,203)	\$1,703,732 (\$32,764)
178 (188)	RB Leipzig	Bundesliga	£1,269,382 (£24,411)	\$1,650,197 (\$31,735)
179 (166)	Guangzhou Evergrande	CSL	£1,149,117 (£22,098)	\$1,493,852 (\$28,728)
180 (184)	Hoffenheim	Bundesliga	£1,125,415 (£21,643)	\$1,463,039 (\$28,135)
181 (180)	Borussia Monchengladbach	Bundesliga	£1,076,586 (£20,704)	\$1,399,561 (\$26,915)
182 (160)	Shangdong Luneng	CSL	£1,066,564 (£20,511)	\$1,386,533 (\$26,664)
183 (189)	Torino	Serie A	£1,052,596 (£20,242)	\$1,368,375 (\$26,315)
184 (182)	Yomiuri Giants	NPB	£1,051,486 (£20,221)	\$1,366,932 (\$26,287)
185 (187)	Espanyol	La Liga	£1,046,175 (£20,119)	\$1,360,028 (\$26,154)
186 (194)	Sampdoria	Serie A	£1,039,981 (£20,000)	\$1,351,976 (\$26,000)
187 (-)	Huddersfield	EPL	£1,024,012 (£19,693)	\$1,331,216 (\$25,600)
188 (183)	Hamburg	Bundesliga	£1,014,018 (£19,500)	\$1,318,223 (\$25,350)
189 (185)	Hertha Berlin	Bundesliga	£1,000,350 (£19,238)	\$1,300,455 (\$25,009)
190 (201)	FC Koln	Bundesliga	£992,250 (£19,082)	\$1,289,925 (\$24,806)
191 (223)	Real Betis	La Liga	£978,504 (£18,817)	\$1,272,056 (\$24,463)
192 (175)	Florentina	Serie A	£974,605 (£18,742)	\$1,266,986 (\$24,365)
193 (208)	Celta Vigo	La Liga	£968,032 (£18,616)	\$1,258,442 (\$24,201)
194 (213)	Nice	Ligue 1	£915,007 (£17,596)	\$1,189,510 (\$22,875)
195 (165)	Jiangsu Suning	CSL	£914,904 (£17,594)	\$1,189,375 (\$22,873)
196 (196)	Deportivo La Coruna	La Liga	£881,608 (£16,954)	\$1,146,090 (\$22,040)
197 (64)	San Diego Padres	MLB	£857,926 (£16,499)	\$1,115,303 (\$21,448)
198 (215)	Malaga	La Liga	£856,060 (£16,463)	\$1,112,878 (\$21,402)
199 (186)	Genoa	Serie A	£848,679 (£16,321)	\$1,103,282 (\$21,217)
200 (191)	Bologna	Serie A	£821,538 (£15,799)	\$1,068,000 (\$20,538)
201 (195)	Sassuolo	Serie A	£769,214 (£14,793)	\$999,979 (\$19,230)
202 (212)	Atalanta	Serie A	£769,136 (£14,791)	\$999,877 (\$19,228)
203 (192)	Celtic	Scot Prem	£735,040 (£14,135)	\$955,552 (\$18,376)
204 (197)	Beijing Guoan	CSL	£724,938 (£13,941)	\$942,419 (\$18,123)

205-254

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
205 (198)	Hanshin Tigers	NPB	£686,549 (£13,203)	\$892,514 (\$17,164)
206 (209)	Cagliari	Serie A	£653,903 (£12,575)	\$850,074 (\$16,348)
207 (228)	Eibar	La Liga	£648,185 (£12,465)	\$842,641 (\$16,205)
208 (190)	Bordeaux	Ligue 1	£643,032 (£12,366)	\$835,942 (\$16,076)
209 (205)	Eintracht Frankfurt	Bundesliga	£638,471 (£12,278)	\$830,013 (\$15,962)
210 (204)	Toronto FC	MLS	£638,171 (£12,273)	\$829,623 (\$15,954)
211 (207)	Tokyo Yakult Swallows	NPB	£626,432 (£12,047)	\$814,362 (\$15,661)
212 (211)	Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters	NPB	£623,592 (£11,992)	\$810,669 (\$15,590)
213 (200)	Werder Bremen	Bundesliga	£621,214 (£11,946)	\$807,579 (\$15,530)
214 (206)	Lille	Ligue 1	£620,691 (£11,936)	\$806,898 (\$15,517)
215 (-)	Girona	La Liga	£617,283 (£11,871)	\$802,468 (\$15,432)
216 (193)	Orix Buffaloes	NPB	£615,634 (£11,839)	\$800,324 (\$15,391)
217 (210)	Saitama Seibu Lions	NPB	£611,385 (£11,757)	\$794,800 (\$15,285)
218 (-)	Hellas Verona	Serie A	£597,728 (£11,495)	\$777,047 (\$14,943)
219 (-)	SPAL	Serie A	£576,218 (£11,081)	\$749,083 (\$14,405)
220 (202)	Saint-Etienne	Ligue 1	£568,341 (£10,930)	\$738,843 (\$14,209)
221 (217)	Mainz	Bundesliga	£562,855 (£10,824)	\$731,712 (\$14,071)
222 (248)	Alaves	La Liga	£560,444 (£10,778)	\$728,578 (\$14,011)
223 (-)	Getafe	La Liga	£544,781 (£10,477)	\$708,215 (\$13,620)
224 (-)	Stuttgart	Bundesliga	£538,400 (£10,354)	\$699,920 (\$13,460)
225 (253)	Las Palmas	La Liga	£537,863 (£10,344)	\$699,222 (\$13,447)
226 (224)	Toulouse	Ligue 1	£536,500 (£10,317)	\$697,450 (\$13,413)
227 (214)	Udinese	Serie A	£534,511 (£10,279)	\$694,865 (\$13,363)
228 (254)	Leganes	La Liga	£523,274 (£10,063)	\$680,256 (\$13,082)
229 (225)	Chievo	Serie A	£522,019 (£10,039)	\$678,625 (\$13,050)
230 (229)	Rennes	Ligue 1	£520,686 (£10,013)	\$676,892 (\$13,017)
231 (221)	Augsburg	Bundesliga	£517,021 (£9,943)	\$672,127 (\$12,926)
232 (199)	New York City FC	MLS	£492,592 (£9,473)	\$640,370 (\$12,315)
233 (-)	Levante	La Liga	£490,750 (£9,438)	\$637,975 (\$12,269)
234 (219)	Chiba Lotte Marines	NPB	£490,423 (£9,431)	\$637,549 (\$12,261)
235 (216)	Hiroshima Toyo Carp	NPB	£488,979 (£9,403)	\$635,673 (\$12,224)
236 (222)	Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles	NPB	£465,023 (£8,943)	\$604,531 (\$11,626)
237 (226)	Montpellier	Ligue 1	£464,500 (£8,933)	\$603,850 (\$11,613)
238 (251)	Nantes	Ligue 1	£458,081 (£8,809)	\$595,506 (\$11,452)
239 (305)	Changchun Yatai	CSL	£457,308 (£8,794)	\$594,500 (\$11,433)
240 (234)	Yokohama DeNA Bay Stars	NPB	£455,869 (£8,767)	\$592,629 (\$11,397)
241 (-)	Hannover 96	Bundesliga	£449,966 (£8,653)	\$584,956 (\$11,249)
242 (240)	Freiburg	Bundesliga	£448,718 (£8,629)	\$583,334 (\$11,218)
243 (256)	Tianjin Teda	CSL	£442,382 (£8,507)	\$575,097 (\$11,060)
244 (231)	Chunichi Dragons	NPB	£430,188 (£8,273)	\$559,244 (\$10,755)
245 (-)	Benevento	Serie A	£427,885 (£8,229)	\$556,250 (\$10,697)
246 (235)	Caen	Ligue 1	£416,770 (£8,015)	\$541,801 (\$10,419)
247 (-)	Amiens	Ligue 1	£409,067 (£7,867)	\$531,787 (\$10,227)
248 (-)	Strasbourg	Ligue 1	£378,393 (£7,277)	\$491,911 (\$9,460)
249 (307)	Chicago Fire	MLS	£369,011 (£7,096)	\$479,714 (\$9,225)
250 (242)	Metz	Ligue 1	£366,889 (£7,056)	\$476,956 (\$9,172)
251 (239)	Dijon	Ligue 1	£365,100 (£7,021)	\$474,630 (\$9,128)
252 (250)	Guingamp	Ligue 1	£355,500 (£6,837)	\$462,150 (\$8,888)
253 (220)	LA Galaxy	MLS	£347,091 (£6,675)	\$451,218 (\$8,677)
254 (243)	Angers	Ligue 1	£346,900 (£6,671)	\$450,970 (\$8,673)

255-302

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
255 (249)	Orlando City	MLS	£338,954 (£6,518)	\$440,640 (\$8,474)
256 (244)	Rangers	Scot Prem	£329,600 (£6,338)	\$428,480 (\$8,240)
257 (-)	Guizhou Hengfeng Zhicheng	CSL	£323,623 (£6,224)	\$420,710 (\$8,091)
258 (245)	Seattle Sounders	MLS	£317,112 (£6,098)	\$412,246 (\$7,928)
259 (303)	Guangzhou R&F	CSL	£314,543 (£6,049)	\$408,906 (\$7,864)
260 (267)	Portland Timbers	MLS	£308,380 (£5,930)	\$400,894 (\$7,710)
261 (-)	Troyes	Ligue 1	£300,541 (£5,780)	\$390,703 (\$7,514)
262 (272)	Henan Jianye	CSL	£296,490 (£5,702)	\$385,437 (\$7,412)
263 (246)	Crotone	Serie A	£292,575 (£5,626)	\$380,347 (\$7,314)
264 (252)	Urawa Red Diamonds	J.League	£289,185 (£5,561)	\$375,941 (\$7,230)
265 (261)	Chongqing Lifan	CSL	£248,923 (£4,787)	\$323,600 (\$6,223)
266 (255)	Colorado Rapids	MLS	£237,888 (£4,575)	\$309,255 (\$5,947)
267 (265)	Vissel Kobe	J.League	£236,037 (£4,539)	\$306,848 (\$5,901)
268 (-)	Atlanta United	MLS	£223,518 (£4,298)	\$290,573 (\$5,588)
269 (-)	Cerezo Osaka	J.League	£212,654 (£4,090)	\$276,450 (\$5,316)
270 (259)	FC Tokyo	J.League	£211,752 (£4,072)	\$275,277 (\$5,294)
271 (286)	Real Salt Lake	MLS	£211,378 (£4,065)	\$274,791 (\$5,284)
272 (278)	Kashima Antlers	J.League	£206,362 (£3,969)	\$268,271 (\$5,159)
273 (257)	Gamba Osaka	J.League	£199,736 (£3,841)	\$259,657 (\$4,993)
274 (281)	Sporting Kansas City	MLS	£194,922 (£3,748)	\$253,398 (\$4,873)
275 (282)	Vancouver Whitecaps	MLS	£194,216 (£3,735)	\$252,480 (\$4,855)
276 (279)	New England Revolution	MLS	£193,984 (£3,730)	\$252,179 (\$4,850)
277 (268)	Kawasaki Frontale	J.League	£191,776 (£3,688)	\$249,309 (\$4,794)
278 (291)	Gold Coast	AFL	£189,586 (£3,646)	\$246,461 (\$4,740)
279 (285)	New York Red Bulls	MLS	£189,428 (£3,643)	\$246,257 (\$4,736)
280 (301)	Western Bulldogs	AFL	£188,100 (£3,617)	\$244,530 (\$4,703)
281 (270)	San Jose Earthquakes	MLS	£184,596 (£3,550)	\$239,975 (\$4,615)
282 (262)	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	J.League	£183,350 (£3,526)	\$238,355 (\$4,584)
283 (258)	Yokohama F Marinos	J.League	£183,099 (£3,521)	\$238,028 (\$4,577)
284 (308)	FC Dallas	MLS	£181,055 (£3,482)	\$235,371 (\$4,526)
285 (293)	Melbourne	AFL	£180,971 (£3,480)	\$235,263 (\$4,524)
286 (297)	North Melbourne	AFL	£180,971 (£3,480)	\$235,263 (\$4,524)
287 (296)	Liaoning Whowin	CSL	£180,129 (£3,464)	\$234,168 (\$4,503)
288 (276)	Greater Western Sydney	AFL	£179,964 (£3,461)	\$233,954 (\$4,499)
289 (274)	Sydney Swans	AFL	£177,579 (£3,415)	\$230,852 (\$4,439)
290 (283)	Philadelphia Union	MLS	£176,601 (£3,396)	\$229,581 (\$4,415)
291 (280)	Richmond	AFL	£176,546 (£3,395)	\$229,510 (\$4,414)
292 (266)	Collingwood	AFL	£175,686 (£3,379)	\$228,391 (\$4,392)
293 (295)	Brisbane Lions	AFL	£175,679 (£3,378)	\$228,382 (\$4,392)
294 (271)	Fremantle	AFL	£174,271 (£3,351)	\$226,553 (\$4,357)
295 (298)	St Kilda	AFL	£174,271 (£3,351)	\$226,553 (\$4,357)
296 (273)	Geelong	AFL	£173,279 (£3,332)	\$225,263 (\$4,332)
297 (288)	Columbus Crew	MLS	£173,014 (£3,327)	\$224,918 (\$4,325)
298 (264)	West Coast Eagles	AFL	£172,843 (£3,324)	\$224,696 (\$4,321)
299 (277)	Carlton	AFL	£172,821 (£3,323)	\$224,668 (\$4,321)
300 (284)	Adelaide Crows	AFL	£172,814 (£3,323)	\$224,659 (\$4,320)
301 (292)	Port Adelaide	AFL	£172,814 (£3,323)	\$224,659 (\$4,320)
302 (275)	Essendon	AFL	£172,154 (£3,311)	\$223,800 (\$4,304)

303-348

RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	LEAGUE	AVG ANNUAL PAY £ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)	AVG ANNUAL PAY \$ (AVG WEEKLY PAY)
303 (263)	Hawthorn	AFL	£169,957 (£3,268)	\$220,944 (\$4,249)
304 (289)	Jubilo Iwata	J.League	£155,869 (£2,997)	\$202,629 (\$3,897)
305 (-)	Shimizu S-Pulse	J.League	£153,974 (£2,961)	\$200,166 (\$3,849)
306 (294)	Omiya Ardija	J.League	£153,680 (£2,955)	\$199,784 (\$3,842)
307 (-)	Minnesota United	MLS	£151,649 (£2,916)	\$197,143 (\$3,791)
308 (269)	Montreal Impact	MLS	£150,843 (£2,901)	\$196,097 (\$3,771)
309 (300)	DC United	MLS	£150,212 (£2,889)	\$195,276 (\$3,755)
310 (299)	Kashiwa Reysol	J.League	£144,789 (£2,784)	\$188,225 (\$3,620)
311 (309)	Sagan Tosu	J.League	£141,947 (£2,730)	\$184,532 (\$3,549)
312 (302)	Houston Dynamo	MLS	£139,869 (£2,690)	\$181,829 (\$3,497)
313 (304)	Aberdeen	Scot Prem	£136,382 (£2,623)	\$177,296 (\$3,410)
314 (-)	Consadole Sapporo	J.League	£113,005 (£2,173)	\$146,906 (\$2,825)
315 (312)	Yanbian Funde	CSL	£99,048 (£1,905)	\$128,762 (\$2,476)
316 (314)	Hearts	Scot Prem	£95,514 (£1,837)	\$124,168 (\$2,388)
317 (313)	Vegalta Sendai	J.League	£89,461 (£1,720)	\$116,299 (\$2,237)
318 (-)	Hibernian	Scot Prem	£87,100 (£1,675)	\$113,230 (\$2,178)
319 (310)	Albirex Niigata	J.League	£81,866 (£1,574)	\$106,426 (\$2,047)
320 (317)	Ventforet Kofu	J.League	£78,498 (£1,510)	\$102,047 (\$1,962)
321 (318)	Ottawa Redblacks	CFL	£74,504 (£1,433)	\$96,855 (\$1,863)
322 (319)	Calgary Stampeders	CFL	£69,685 (£1,340)	\$90,591 (\$1,742)
323 (316)	Edmonton Eskimos	CFL	£68,117 (£1,310)	\$88,551 (\$1,703)
324 (322)	Winnipeg Blue Bombers	CFL	£66,630 (£1,281)	\$86,619 (\$1,666)
325 (320)	Saskatchewan Roughriders	CFL	£66,614 (£1,281)	\$86,599 (\$1,665)
326 (321)	Hamilton Tiger-Cats	CFL	£66,082 (£1,271)	\$85,906 (\$1,652)
327 (-)	Atlanta Dream	WNBA	£65,663 (£1,263)	\$85,362 (\$1,642)
328 (323)	BC Lions	CFL	£65,374 (£1,257)	\$84,986 (\$1,634)
329 (326)	Montreal Alouettes	CFL	£63,140 (£1,214)	\$82,082 (\$1,579)
330 (324)	Toronto Argonauts	CFL	£62,043 (£1,193)	\$80,656 (\$1,551)
331 (-)	Minnesota Lynx	WNBA	£61,324 (£1,179)	\$79,721 (\$1,533)
332 (-)	Phoenix Mercury	WNBA	£61,279 (£1,178)	\$79,663 (\$1,532)
333 (-)	Los Angeles Sparks	WNBA	£60,938 (£1,172)	\$79,219 (\$1,523)
334 (325)	Dundee	Scot Prem	£59,904 (£1,152)	\$77,875 (\$1,498)
335 (-)	Washington Mystics	WNBA	£59,724 (£1,149)	\$77,641 (\$1,493)
336 (-)	Connecticut Sun	WNBA	£58,604 (£1,127)	\$76,185 (\$1,465)
337 (332)	Partick Thistle	Scot Prem	£58,175 (£1,119)	\$75,628 (\$1,454)
338 (330)	Ross County	Scot Prem	£56,394 (£1,085)	\$73,312 (\$1,410)
339 (-)	New York Liberty	WNBA	£56,163 (£1,080)	\$73,011 (\$1,404)
340 (-)	San Antonio Stars	WNBA	£55,187 (£1,061)	\$71,743 (\$1,380)
341 (329)	Kilmarnock	Scot Prem	£55,100 (£1,060)	\$71,630 (\$1,378)
342 (-)	Indiana Fever	WNBA	£54,730 (£1,052)	\$71,149 (\$1,368)
343 (-)	Dallas Wings	WNBA	£54,414 (£1,046)	\$70,738 (\$1,360)
344 (-)	Seattle Storm	WNBA	£52,438 (£1,008)	\$68,169 (\$1,311)
345 (-)	Chicago Sky	WNBA	£50,531 (£972)	\$65,691 (\$1,263)
346 (331)	St Johnstone	Scot Prem	£47,992 (£923)	\$62,389 (\$1,200)
347 (328)	Motherwell	Scot Prem	£42,662 (£820)	\$55,461 (\$1,067)
348 (333)	Hamilton	Scot Prem	£41,488 (£798)	\$53,934 (\$1,037)

NBA ANALYSIS

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



TOTAL SALARIES:
£2,430,053,694
\$3,159,069,802

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No1 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£5,497,859
\$7,147,217

MEDIAN SALARY:
£2,934,149
\$3,814,394

THE STATE OF PLAY

The NBA remains the best paid sports league in the world by average salary, and Oklahoma City Thunder are now the best paid sports team in the world, bar none. How they reached No1 is explained in the introductory essay. The NBA's dominance continues a trend.

A year ago we explored how the new 9-year \$24 billion TV deals from 2016-17 had delivered huge average pay rises, from \$4.6m per season to \$6.4m. This year, NBA salaries have leapt by another 10.6 per cent, or by \$757,006 on average.

One significant structural change for 2017-18 is the addition of so-called 'two-way (TW) contracts' between NBA teams and their affiliates in the NBA G League. (The latter is the NBA's development league, rebranded from this season with a 'G' as a part of a sponsorship deal with Gatorade.)

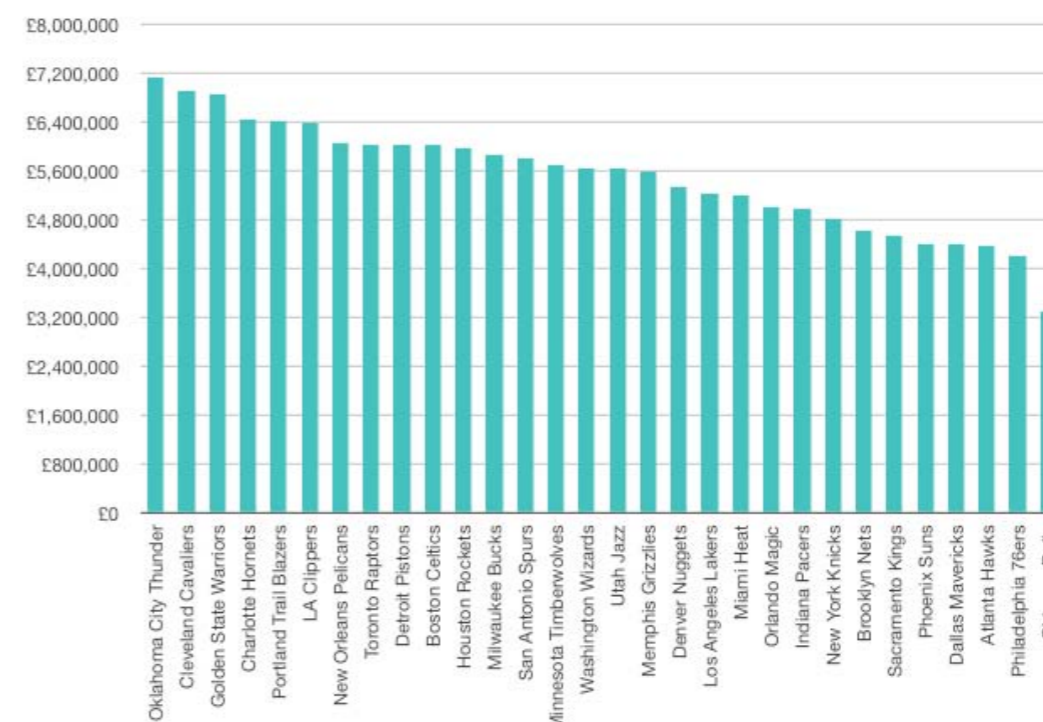
TW players - in effect development players - earn \$75,000 for their G League season plus a pro rata sum of an NBA contract for a maximum of 45 days, if called up. The upshot: TW players can earn just under \$300,000 per year; or small beer by NBA standards.

The TW contracts potentially open up two new roster spots per team, increasing maximum player numbers from 15 to 17. 'Potentially' is the operative word; not all teams are using both TW players. Roster sizes on opening day varied from 15 to 17 players.

Our NBA figures for 2017-18 include only the 442 'full-time' NBA players on opening day, and not the 49 TW players. For the sake of completeness, even if we had included all the 'low paid' TW players in the NBA sums, average salaries year-on-year would still have risen.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, NBA, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Oklahoma City Thunder	£7,150,388	\$9,295,504
2	Cleveland Cavaliers	£6,919,714	\$8,995,628
3	Golden State Warriors	£6,877,528	\$8,940,786
4	Charlotte Hornets	£6,445,974	\$8,379,766
5	Portland Trail Blazers	£6,434,440	\$8,364,772
6	LA Clippers	£6,408,537	\$8,331,098
7	New Orleans Pelicans	£6,063,867	\$7,883,028
8	Toronto Raptors	£6,041,065	\$7,853,384
9	Detroit Pistons	£6,039,324	\$7,851,121
10	Boston Celtics	£6,031,926	\$7,841,504
11	Houston Rockets	£5,980,476	\$7,774,619
12	Milwaukee Bucks	£5,873,909	\$7,636,082
13	San Antonio Spurs	£5,807,031	\$7,549,140
14	Minnesota Timberwolves	£5,706,740	\$7,418,763
15	Washington Wizards	£5,652,968	\$7,348,859
16	Utah Jazz	£5,645,592	\$7,339,269
17	Memphis Grizzlies	£5,586,599	\$7,262,578
18	Denver Nuggets	£5,360,994	\$6,969,292
19	Los Angeles Lakers	£5,235,333	\$6,805,932
20	Miami Heat	£5,221,321	\$6,787,718
21	Orlando Magic	£5,027,759	\$6,536,087
22	Indiana Pacers	£4,980,303	\$6,474,394
23	New York Knicks	£4,819,353	\$6,265,159
24	Brooklyn Nets	£4,626,771	\$6,014,803
25	Sacramento Kings	£4,545,112	\$5,908,646
26	Phoenix Suns	£4,423,622	\$5,750,709
27	Dallas Mavericks	£4,423,111	\$5,750,044
28	Atlanta Hawks	£4,395,440	\$5,714,072
29	Philadelphia 76ers	£4,229,340	\$5,498,142
30	Chicago Bulls	£3,300,623	\$4,290,810



NBA ANALYSIS

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 2.2 TO 1

SIX OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 11 OF 17 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE NBA SHOULD BE RELATIVELY COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Thunder salary at the top of the NBA pay list (£7.15m) and the average Bulls salary at the bottom (£3.3m) is huge. The total payrolls for their respective 14 and 15 'full-time' players add up to £100.1m and £49.5m. It doesn't bode well for the Bulls and the handful of lowest payers around them. There is a consistent pattern in recent years of teams at the bottom of the list having woeful seasons.

Yet a ratio of 2.2 to 1 from top to bottom in pay terms is fairer than in most of the leagues in this study. And over the last decade of completed NBA seasons (at the time of writing), there have been seven different Finals winners, eight different finalists, and no team had won more than twice in that period.

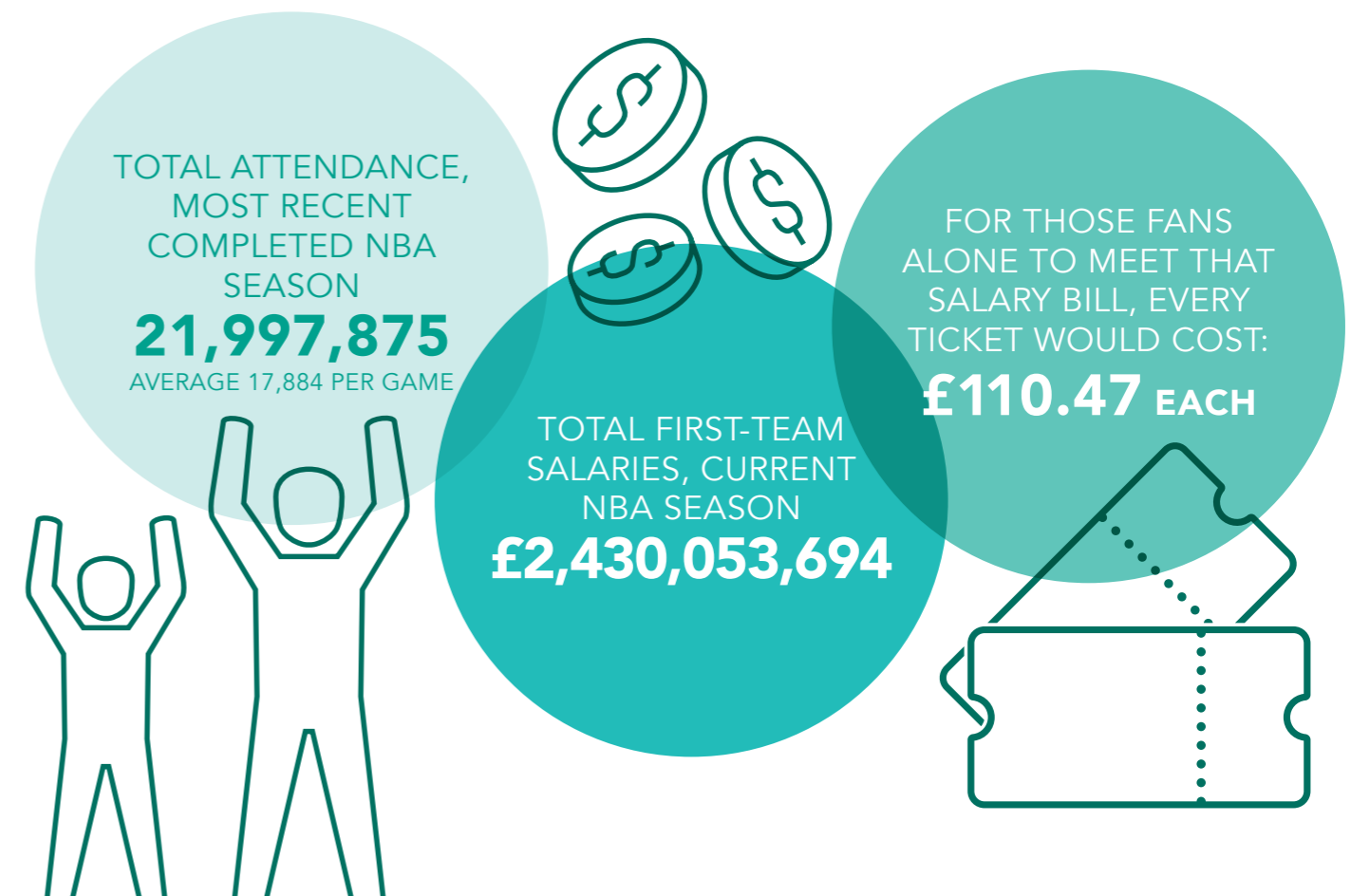
The NBA is less 'top heavy' than most of the GSSS leagues, with the top 10 per cent of earners making 'only' 34 per cent of the money. Almost three in 10 of the players (or 120 from 442) are earning \$10 million or more this season, with 70 of them making \$15m+ and 39 of those making \$20m+.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then the Thunder will be expecting to break up the Warriors / Cavaliers duopoly of the past three seasons, or at least make an impact, and the other two there or thereabouts, followed by Charlotte's Hornets, Portland's Trail Blazers and LA's Clippers, all averaging \$8m+ per player wage bills. At the other extreme, the Bulls, 76ers, Hawks, Mavericks, Suns and Kings are the six teams averaging below \$6m per man, which, extraordinarily, might be 'flop' territory.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



MLB ANALYSIS

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:

£2,983,295,419
\$3,878,284,045

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:

No2 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£3,436,976
\$4,468,069

MEDIAN SALARY:

£1,201,923
\$1,562,500

THE STATE OF PLAY

Major League Baseball players had average pay that climbed by almost two per cent in 2017, by almost \$81,000 per man to nearly \$4.5m. The median salary climbed above last year's \$1.5m by more than four per cent to slightly more than \$1.56m. The MLB as a whole has cemented its place as the second best paying league in the world - by average first-team pay - behind the NBA.

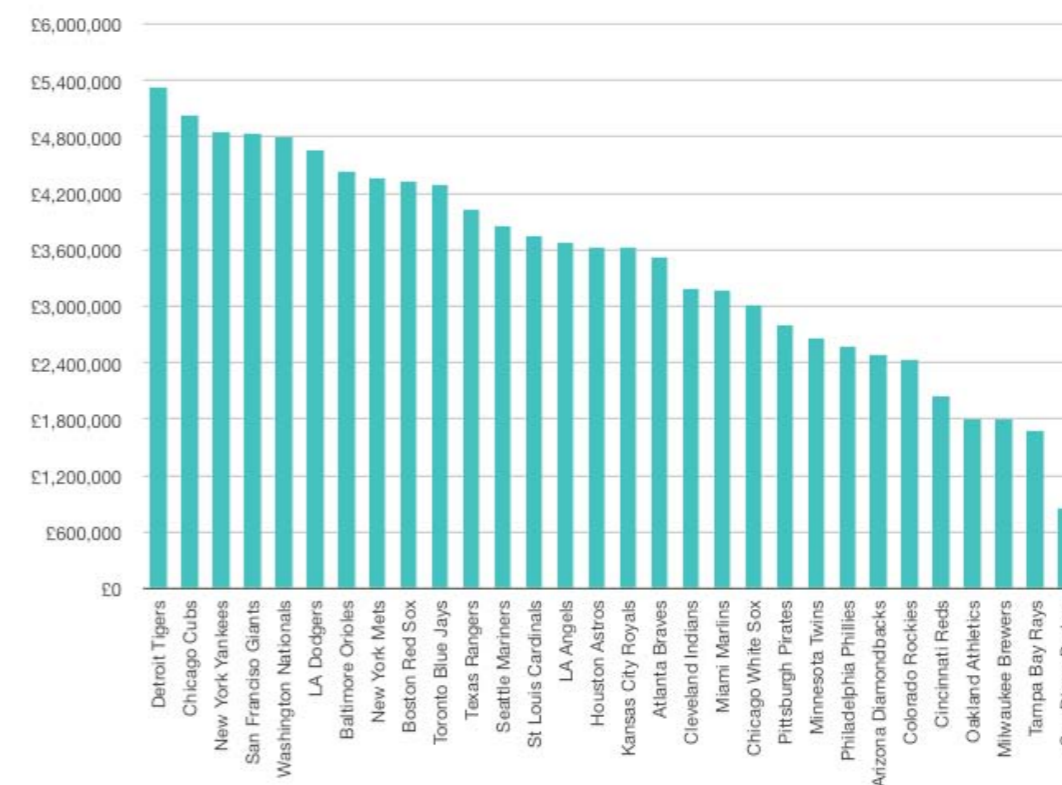
Yet something notable has happened in this year's list that highlights how the NBA's dominance not just continues but grows. There is not a single MLB team in this year's top 20 teams, whereas there had been between two and six every year in the previous seven editions of the GSSS. And the New York Yankees - the MLB's No1 brand in terms of global recognition - are not even in the top 30 this year.

In every GSSS before this year, the Yankees have been inside the top 10, from the top of the pile at No1 in the inaugural study in 2010 to No3 the following year, No6 in 2012, then No5, No2, No9 and then No2 last year behind the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers. The highest placed MLB team this year are the Detroit Tigers at No22.

MLB has more individual players earning \$10m+ each than any sports league in the world. The figure for 2017 was 135, or more than one player in every seven. That was up from 125 in 2016. The league has become ever so slightly less 'top heavy' with the top 10 per cent of players earning just below 43 per cent of all salaries, down from just above 43 per cent last year.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, MLB, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Detroit Tigers	£5,332,858	\$6,932,715
2	Chicago Cubs	£5,032,204	\$6,541,865
3	New York Yankees	£4,854,393	\$6,310,711
4	San Francisco Giants	£4,849,760	\$6,304,689
5	Washington Nationals	£4,814,857	\$6,259,314
6	LA Dodgers	£4,664,760	\$6,064,187
7	Baltimore Orioles	£4,441,873	\$5,774,435
8	New York Mets	£4,374,310	\$5,686,603
9	Boston Red Sox	£4,324,742	\$5,622,164
10	Toronto Blue Jays	£4,306,455	\$5,598,392
11	Texas Rangers	£4,036,909	\$5,247,982
12	Seattle Mariners	£3,851,308	\$5,006,701
13	St Louis Cardinals	£3,759,744	\$4,887,667
14	LA Angels	£3,691,432	\$4,798,861
15	Houston Astros	£3,630,880	\$4,720,144
16	Kansas City Royals	£3,628,899	\$4,717,568
17	Atlanta Braves	£3,521,526	\$4,577,984
18	Cleveland Indians	£3,186,570	\$4,142,542
19	Miami Marlins	£3,168,909	\$4,119,582
20	Chicago White Sox	£3,010,746	\$3,913,970
21	Pittsburgh Pirates	£2,799,936	\$3,639,917
22	Minnesota Twins	£2,673,408	\$3,475,431
23	Philadelphia Phillies	£2,586,343	\$3,362,245
24	Arizona Diamondbacks	£2,492,596	\$3,240,375
25	Colorado Rockies	£2,440,230	\$3,172,299
26	Cincinnati Reds	£2,044,064	\$2,657,283
27	Oakland Athletics	£1,810,299	\$2,353,389
28	Milwaukee Brewers	£1,805,328	\$2,346,927
29	Tampa Bay Rays	£1,682,272	\$2,186,954
30	San Diego Padres	£857,926	\$1,115,303



MLB ANALYSIS

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 6.2 TO 1

ELEVEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; SIX OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, MLB WILL TEND TO FAVOUR RICH TEAMS BUT NOT HUGELY

ON BALANCE

Two phenomena appear to be at play in MLB - first that money does talk to an extent, as you would expect with big disparities between the best and worst payers. Yet over time, success is spread. To be clear about terms, by 'over time' we mean for this exercise the past 10 years and by 'spread', we mean different teams winning the World Series, or finishing as runners-up.

Eight different teams have won in the past 10 seasons. In reverse order: the Astros, Cubs, Royals, Giants, Red Sox, Cardinals, Yankees and Phillies. The Giants are the only multi-winners in the period (2010, 2012, 2014). A further six teams have been runners-up: the Dodgers, Indians, Mets, Tigers, Rangers and Rays. So a maximum possible 20 winners and runner-up slots have been filled by 16 different teams. You might argue that is 80 per cent of the 'peak spread' possible.

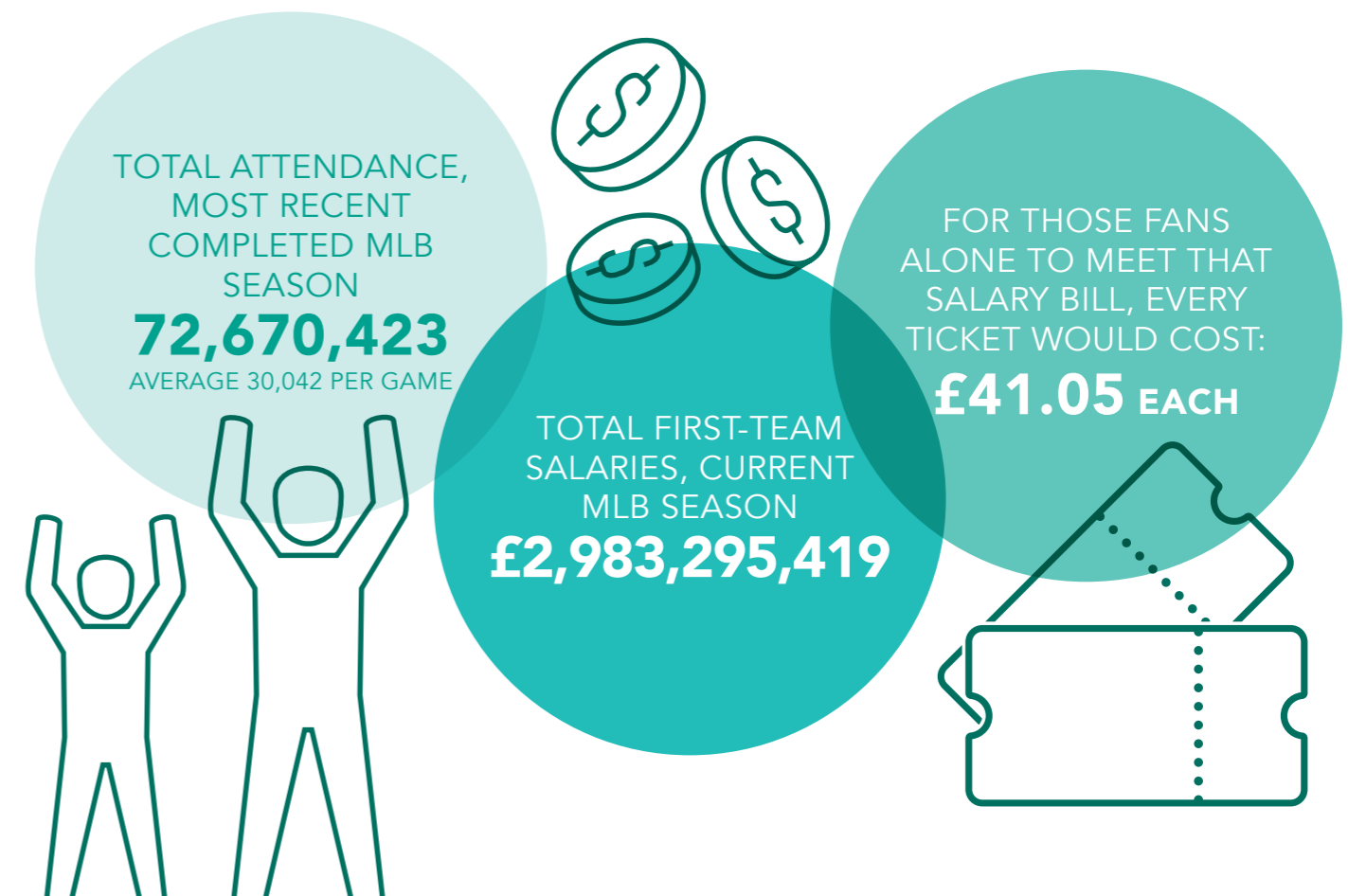
The reason why this might be the case is more complex. On one level, an individual team's payroll can go up and down dramatically from one season to the next, and that does happen (decreasingly). Another might be that MLB 'competitive balance' tools, including but not only the luxury tax, have had an effect. Big-spending teams pay a tax over a certain payroll and some of that money gets redistributed to other teams. The Yankees alone have paid more than \$300m luxury tax since 2003.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talked, then No1 payers Detroit Tigers would have been looking at the World Series having been joined in the League Championship Series (in effect the season semi-finals) by the Chicago Cubs, Yankees and San Francisco Giants. In fact the Tigers and Giants both bombed, finishing rock bottom of their respective leagues with joint-worst 64-98 win-loss records. The Yankees and Cubs did both make the last four, losing respectively to the eventual winners, the Houston Astros, and runners-up, the LA Dodgers. Five of the top nine MLB payers in 2017 reached the season's 'last eight' (Division Series) and none of the bottom five made the post-season.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
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J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



IPL ANALYSIS

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE



TOTAL SALARIES:
£51,666,666
\$67,166,666

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No3 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£2,998,512
\$3,898,065

MEDIAN SALARY:
£2,031,428
\$2,640,857

THE STATE OF PLAY

Arguably the biggest event in the IPL in 2017 happened away from a cricket pitch when a new five-year TV rights deal was concluded for \$2.55bn (£1.96bn) for 2018-2022. That made it the biggest cricketing broadcasting contract in history and guarantees the medium-term future of an event that has struggled for certainty. The uplift in the rights value is extraordinary, from \$100m per year for the first decade to more than five times as much under the new deal with Star India - for all rights globally. IPL league sponsorship income (for the competition, let alone individual teams) is up almost sevenfold to around \$50m.

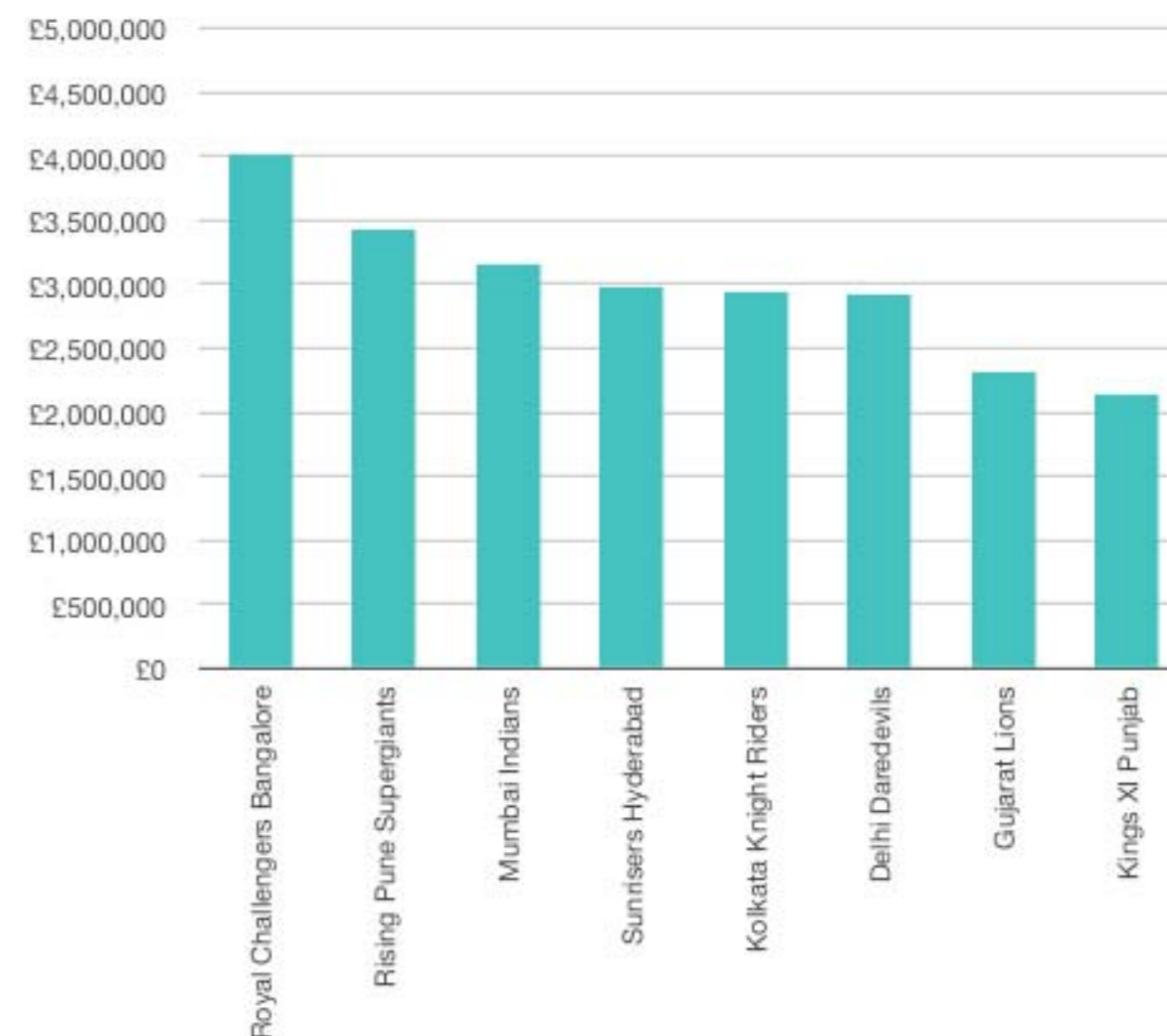
Such was the allure of the product that social network giant Facebook bid \$600m for digital rights - and lost out. Those buying into the IPL - broadcasters and companies alike - are doing so on the basis they can monetise a ballooning Indian market for live coverage of a national obsession, cricket, increasingly via mobile devices, in the world's second most populous country. Early forecasts suggest the new TV deal will (at last) be the solution that turns the IPL's long-term loss-making franchises into businesses that profit. The conglomerate owners tended to be able to soak up losses, but no doubt the millions in profits will be welcome. Whether player budgets rise, or by how much, remains to be seen.

Uniquely in the GSSS, IPL salaries are pro-rated from weekly pay to annual pay because, again uniquely, IPL players typically have multiple different employers concurrently. The vast majority of teams in other leagues contract players for at least 12 months; you simply do not get NFL stars playing a season in the USA then another in Germany in the same year; or a Premier League player appearing freelance for six different teams in a campaign.

A gun-for-hire cricketer example: the West Indies all-rounder Kieron Pollard has been paid to play for his country in 2017 as well as for teams in Australia (Adelaide), Pakistan (Karachi), India in the IPL (Mumbai, earning more than \$1m for eight weeks' play), Bangladesh (Dhaka) and South Africa (Bloemfontein).

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, IPL, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Royal Challengers Bangalore	£4,022,500	\$5,229,250
2	Rising Pune Supergiants	£3,430,952	\$4,460,238
3	Mumbai Indians	£3,164,286	\$4,113,571
4	Sunrisers Hyderabad	£2,990,119	\$3,887,155
5	Kolkata Knight Riders	£2,951,667	\$3,837,167
6	Delhi Daredevils	£2,938,214	\$3,819,679
7	Gujarat Lions	£2,332,203	\$3,031,863
8	Kings XI Punjab	£2,158,155	\$2,805,601



IPL ANALYSIS

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.9 TO 1

FIVE OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 12 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE IPL SHOULD BE RELATIVELY COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Bangalore salary at the top of the IPL pay list (just over £4m annually when pro-rated from weekly sums) and the average Kings XI Punjab salary at the bottom (£2.2m) is wider than usual at a ratio of 1.9 to one - but still nowhere near as unbalanced as most of the GSSS leagues.

In some senses this short-form competition (in more senses than one), with its star-heavy but largely transient staff is an excellent canvas on which to build a competitive event. The salary cap assists that as does the player auction, with a play-off phase adding randomness.

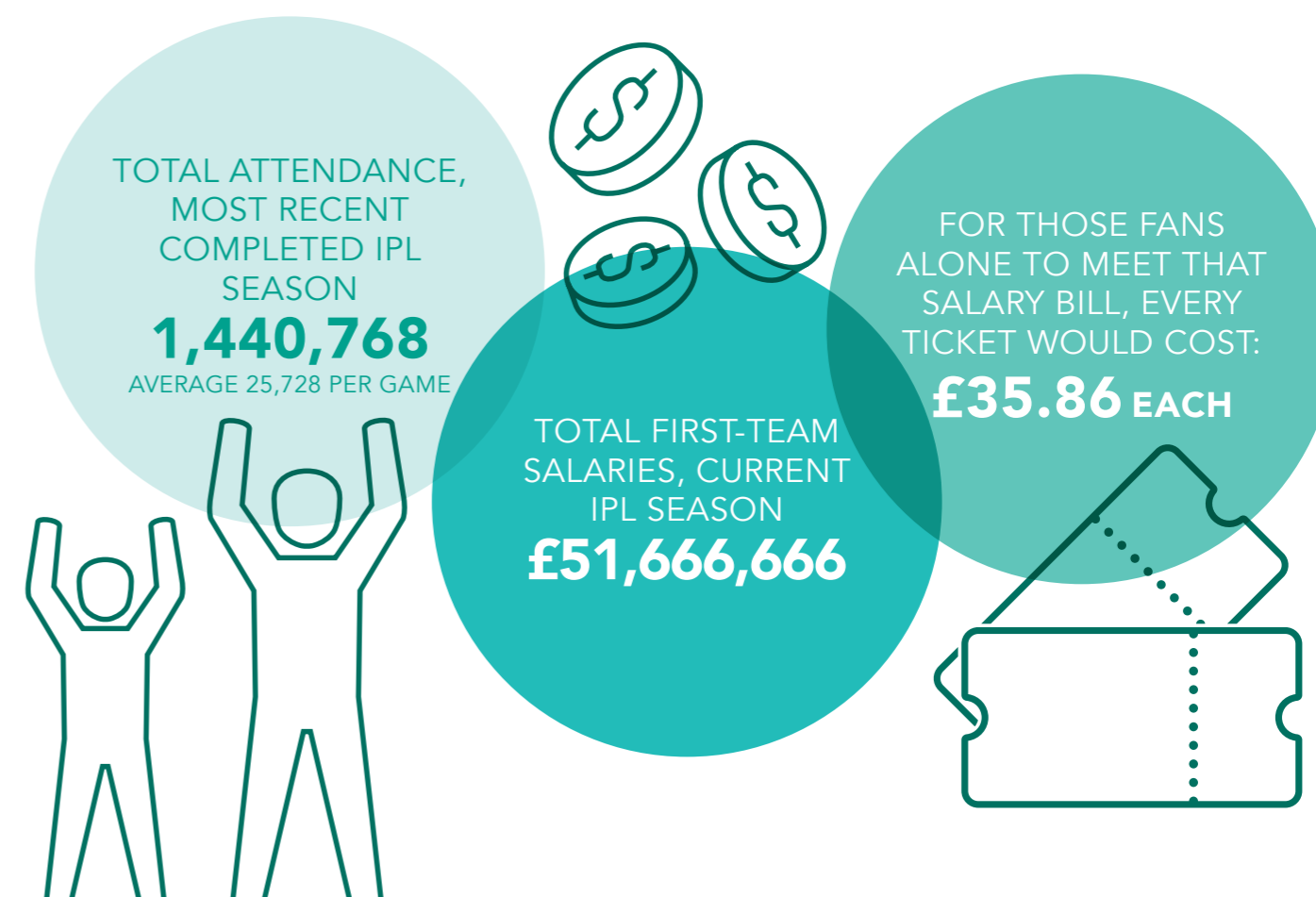
Six different winners in 10 seasons represents a reasonable spread of success, while a seventh team, Bangalore, have finished as runners-up on three occasions. All of the teams playing in the 2017 season have either won the IPL or finished as runners-up at least once, aside from Gujarat Lions. They played just two seasons, 2016 and 2017, as one of the replacements for the Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals, suspended for alleged betting infringements. Chennai and Rajasthan will return in 2018 while stand-ins Gujarat and Pune will make way.

THE MONEY TALK

In a small league with half the eight teams reaching the play-off phase, the winners from Mumbai and runners-up from Pune were two of the top three payers in average salaries, while the other two of the last four were the fourth and fifth best payers, from Kolkata and Hyderabad. Biggest payers Bangalore had the worst points record (7), and a win loss record of 3-10 with one 'no result'.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
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Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



EPL ANALYSIS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£1,379,389,312
\$1,793,206,106

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No4 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£2,642,508
\$3,435,261

MEDIAN SALARY:
£1,963,000
\$2,551,900

THE STATE OF PLAY

The Premier League's status as the world's wealthiest football league has been underpinned in 2017 by headline-grabbing numbers. The three-year TV deals in place from 2016-19 led to 'TV cash' payments of £2.4 billion to the 20 clubs in May 2017, at an average of £120m per club - before a ticket or shirt was sold.

The 20 clubs in the 2017-18 season then spent £1.4 billion gross on new players in the summer, a world record for one division in a transfer window. Title favourites Manchester City, managed by Pep Guardiola, spent more than £200m, or £161m net according to their financial records.

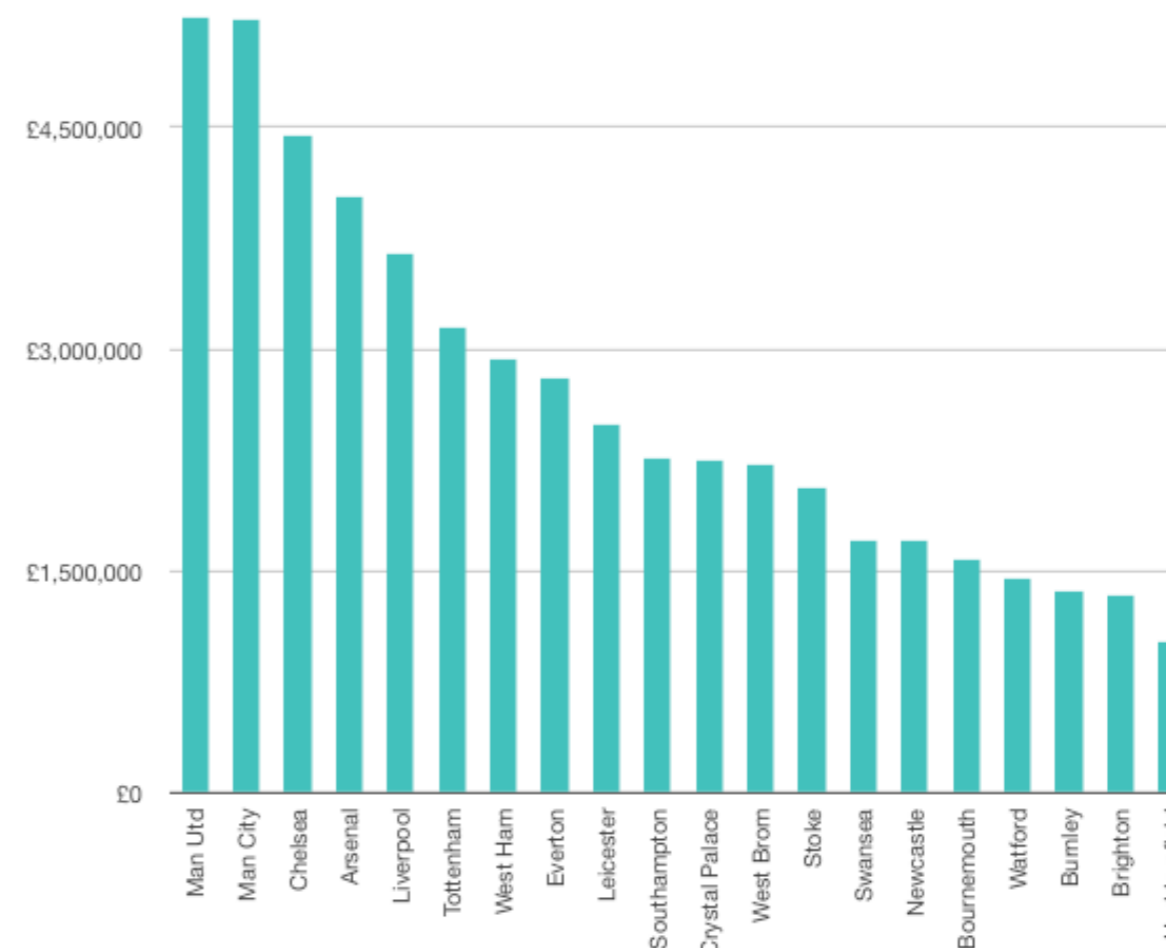
Figures from the CIES Football Observatory in Switzerland show the current City squad are the most expensive, ever, in the history of global football, in prices paid for the first-team squad collectively. They cost €853m to buy (£762m). Two other English clubs were in the top four most expensive squads currently - Manchester United (£700m) and Chelsea (£575m) - with another three in the top 10: Liverpool (£390m), Arsenal (£371m) and Tottenham (£322m).

In recent years, the average Premier League salary has been about twice that in the next best paying league (La Liga). While the gap has closed in this edition of the GSSS (PL pay is now 'only' 60 per cent bigger than in Spain), that is partly down to currency fluctuations, and partly down to some huge new individual contracts in Spain.

Richest does not equate to 'best', of course, in technical terms or European trophies. La Liga has been ahead for a while on those measures. But the Premier League - monied because of its cosmopolitan array of playing and managerial stars, and soap opera narratives - make it the most popular in the world. It might be starting to close the gap again.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, PREMIER LEAGUE, 2017-18

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Man Utd	£5,241,185	\$6,813,541
2	Man City	£5,235,917	\$6,806,692
3	Chelsea	£4,451,200	\$5,786,560
4	Arsenal	£4,037,222	\$5,248,389
5	Liverpool	£3,649,862	\$4,744,821
6	Tottenham	£3,154,667	\$4,101,067
7	West Ham	£2,936,870	\$3,817,930
8	Everton	£2,806,207	\$3,648,069
9	Leicester	£2,499,120	\$3,248,856
10	Southampton	£2,271,286	\$2,952,671
11	Crystal Palace	£2,250,857	\$2,926,114
12	West Brom	£2,221,304	\$2,887,696
13	Stoke	£2,064,400	\$2,683,720
14	Swansea	£1,712,880	\$2,226,744
15	Newcastle	£1,710,222	\$2,223,289
16	Bournemouth	£1,577,333	\$2,050,533
17	Watford	£1,457,857	\$1,895,214
18	Burnley	£1,371,500	\$1,782,950
19	Brighton	£1,346,429	\$1,750,357
20	Huddersfield	£1,024,012	\$1,331,216



EPL ANALYSIS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 5.1 TO 1

TEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; SEVEN OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE PREMIER LEAGUE WILL TEND TO FAVOUR A RICH COHORT

ON BALANCE

The two Manchester clubs, United and City, are neck and neck in basic salary terms at a little more than £5.2m each per player this season according to our calculations. It's highly likely in our view that whichever of the pair achieves the most on the pitch this season will end up with the larger of the two overall wage bills (all staff) for 2017-18. That will be down to bonuses.

It seems entirely plausible that the same 'success factor' defined last seasons's bills (total club bills). United had higher basic pay (see GSSS 2016), and after domestic and European trophy wins, had total club pay (all staff) of £263.5m. City won nothing and had a 13-month wage bill (new accounting adjustment) of £264m, or £244m for 12 months. If United had won nothing last season and City had won two trophies, City's total would have outstripped United's.

The Manchester pair are clear of the rest of the big six (Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool and then a gap to Tottenham) and in turn they are ahead of everyone else. Across the board, the average basic salary in the division is up about 6.7 per cent, or by about £217,000 per man per year.

It is at the smaller clubs, not least at two of the promoted teams, Huddersfield and Brighton, where relative leaps will be greatest, year on year. The resultant ratio of 5 to 1 from top to bottom in average wage spending is not as big as in some recent years.

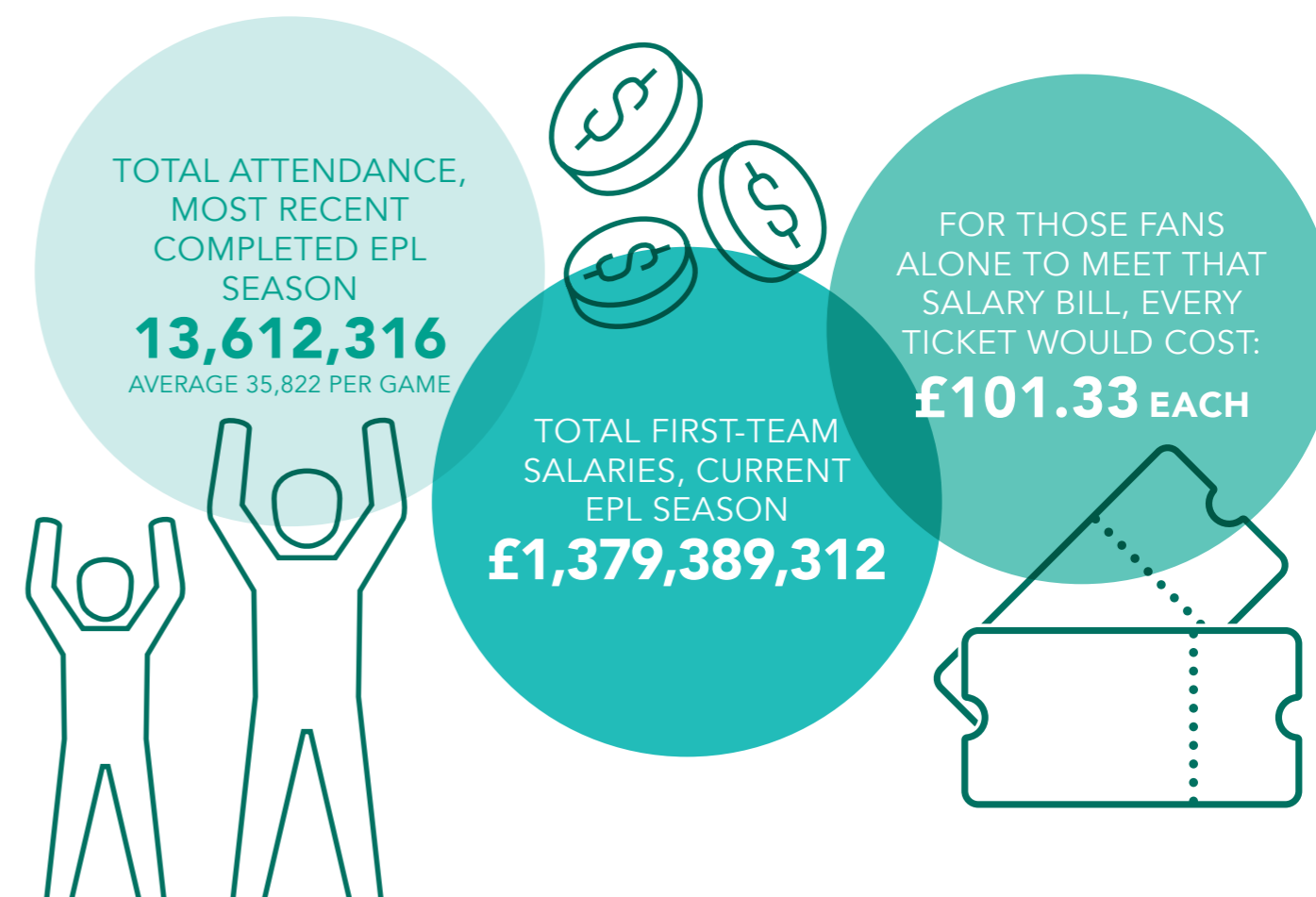
Four different winners in five years (and seven different teams in the top two) indicates slight movement to greater competitiveness. The same four and same seven are applicable to 10 years.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then Manchester will have a 1-2 finish with Chelsea and Arsenal third and fourth ahead of Liverpool in fifth and Tottenham sixth. Nobody would be surprised to see the 'big six' finish in the top six places, in some order. The intrigue lies with who will be most successful applying non-financial resources - coaching and tactical nous; motivational skills; dietary, fitness and recovery techniques - to add a place or more. Wages alone would see Huddersfield, Brighton and Burnley drop - and if they don't then that is testament to managers punching above their weight.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



NHL ANALYSIS

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE



TOTAL SALARIES:
£1,706,239,055
\$2,218,110,771

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No5 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£2,393,042
\$3,110,955

MEDIAN SALARY:
£1,730,769
\$2,250,000

THE STATE OF PLAY

The 2017-18 season is the 100th in NHL history and includes 31 teams, up from 30, with the addition of newcomers the Vegas Golden Knights, who have their home on the Strip. Despite the extra team, the season remains an 82-game campaign from October to April followed by the Stanley Cup play-offs and then an ultimate shot at glory for two franchises.

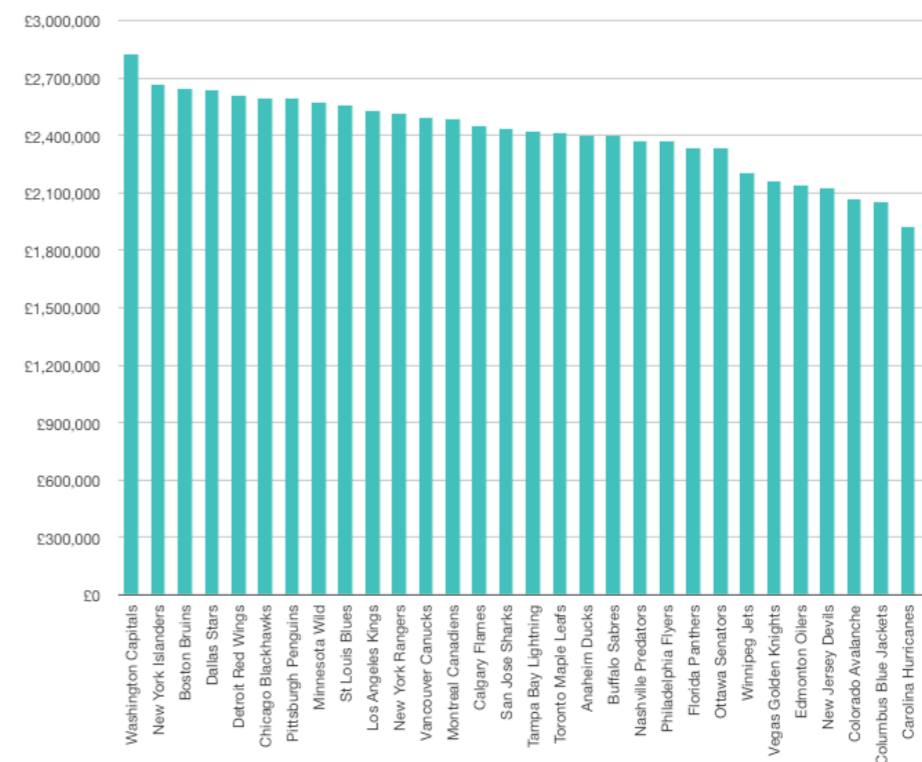
Before the season began, there were two exhibition games between the LA Kings and the Vancouver Canucks in China - the first time NHL teams had played there. The NHL's rationale was an attempt to expand its global footprint, in an Olympic season, while exploiting interest in winter sports following the decision to send the Winter Olympics of 2022 to Beijing. Some fans in Shanghai turned up hoping to see basketball star Kobe Bryant. And in fact they did get to see him; the NBA is huge in China and he had taped a message in support of his home team, the Kings.

Once the season began the early running was being made by the Tampa Bay Lightning, Toronto Maple Leafs and New Jersey Devils in the Eastern Conference and in the Western Conference by the St Louis Blues, Los Angeles Kings and Winnipeg Jets. Continuing the expansion theme (internationally), there were two regular season games in November between the Ottawa Senators and the Colorado Avalanche in Stockholm, Sweden.

The NHL officially marked its centenary in the 2016-17 season, marking 100 years since formation, but the celebrations are continuing into the present term as 2017-18 is the 100th season of actual play. The league will stage an outdoor game between the Ottawa Senators and the Montreal Canadiens in mid-December to formally mark the 100th anniversary of their first NHL Game. And the Toronto Maple Leafs will mark the centennial of the first NHL game - in which their predecessor the Toronto Arenas played - during their game against the Carolina Hurricanes on 19 December.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, NHL, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Washington Capitals	£2,823,328	\$3,670,326
2	New York Islanders	£2,667,475	\$3,467,717
3	Boston Bruins	£2,650,000	\$3,445,000
4	Dallas Stars	£2,639,538	\$3,431,399
5	Detroit Red Wings	£2,609,779	\$3,392,713
6	Chicago Blackhawks	£2,598,913	\$3,378,587
7	Pittsburgh Penguins	£2,596,916	\$3,375,991
8	Minnesota Wild	£2,575,753	\$3,348,478
9	St Louis Blues	£2,559,030	\$3,326,739
10	Los Angeles Kings	£2,529,013	\$3,287,717
11	New York Rangers	£2,516,137	\$3,270,978
12	Vancouver Canucks	£2,492,893	\$3,240,761
13	Montreal Canadiens	£2,488,040	\$3,234,452
14	Calgary Flames	£2,451,923	\$3,187,500
15	San Jose Sharks	£2,434,866	\$3,165,326
16	Tampa Bay Lightning	£2,421,990	\$3,148,587
17	Toronto Maple Leafs	£2,418,701	\$3,144,312
18	Anaheim Ducks	£2,400,744	\$3,120,967
19	Buffalo Sabres	£2,398,227	\$3,117,696
20	Nashville Predators	£2,375,418	\$3,088,043
21	Philadelphia Flyers	£2,370,903	\$3,082,174
22	Florida Panthers	£2,334,833	\$3,035,283
23	Ottawa Senators	£2,334,448	\$3,034,783
24	Winnipeg Jets	£2,207,871	\$2,870,232
25	Vegas Golden Knights	£2,163,907	\$2,813,080
26	Edmonton Oilers	£2,143,227	\$2,786,196
27	New Jersey Devils	£2,128,512	\$2,767,065
28	Colorado Avalanche	£2,071,739	\$2,693,261
29	Columbus Blue Jackets	£2,051,839	\$2,667,391
30	Carolina Hurricanes	£1,923,161	\$2,500,109
31	Arizona Coyotes	£1,805,181	\$2,346,735



NHL ANALYSIS

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.6 TO 1

FOUR OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 13 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE NBA SHOULD BE RELATIVELY COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

Wages across the league have grown by almost seven per cent, year on year. The difference between the average Washington Capitals salary at the top of the NHL pay list (£2.8m) and the average Arizona Coyotes salary at the bottom (£1.8m) is relatively small. The distribution of money among the individual players is also 'fair' - with the highest earning 10 per cent of players making 'only' 28 per cent of all the money. In the most 'top heavy' league in this survey, it's 75 per cent.

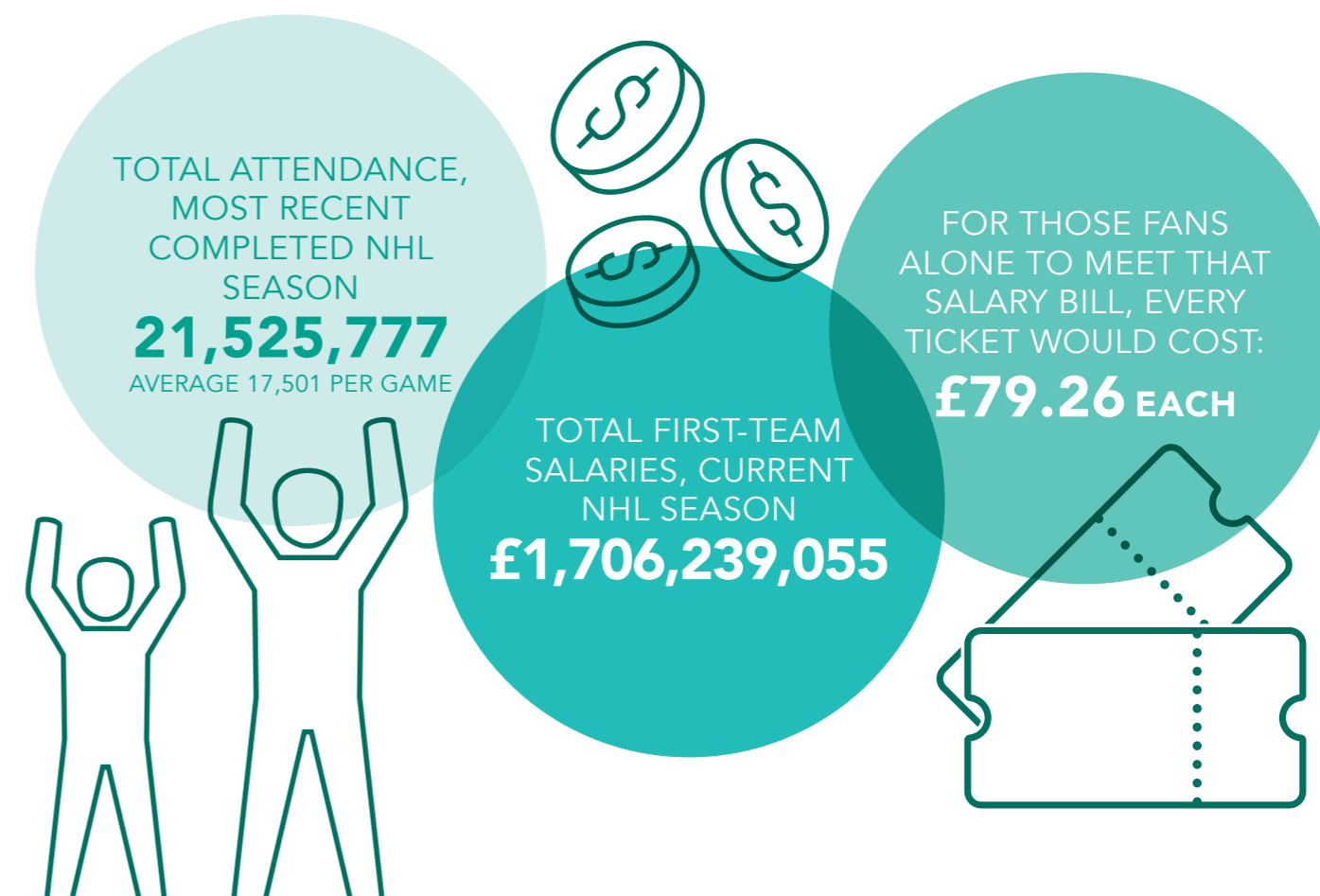
The spread of winners has been reasonable rather than excellent, with five different Stanley Cup winners over the past decade, and three teams multiple champions in that time: the Penguins on three, Blackhawks on three and Kings on two. But then there have been an addition seven different runners-up, so 12 teams contesting the Cup from a theoretical maximum of 20.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money alone talks, then the Washington Capitals, New York Islanders, Boston Bruins and Dallas Stars will be leading the charge come April, while the Colorado Avalanche, Columbus Blue Jackets, Carolina Hurricanes and Arizona Coyotes will experience the play-offs from the outside. Last season, for the record, nine of the top 10 best-paid teams made the play-offs, and just three of the 10 worst-paid teams.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
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NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



NFL ANALYSIS

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE



TOTAL SALARIES:
£3,523,462,880
\$4,580,501,744

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No6 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£2,077,513
\$2,700,768

MEDIAN SALARY:
£828,846
\$1,077,500

THE STATE OF PLAY

Super Bowl 51 was sheer drama: the New England Patriots completed a stunning comeback in Houston to overhaul a 25-point deficit to the Atlanta Falcons in the biggest such win in Super Bowl history. At the time of writing, with Super Bowl 52 - and Justin Timberlake's half-time show - lying in wait in February in Minneapolis, the standings after nine or 10 games per team were starting to paint a clear direction of travel, for some at least.

The Falcons initially struggled to make their presence felt in the NFC South with a 5-4 record after nine games leaving them trailing the New Orleans Saints and Carolina Panthers. In stark contrast, the Pats were sitting pretty in the AFC East with a 7-2 record keeping them clear of the chasing Buffalo Bills. Only the Pittsburgh Steelers in the whole AFC had a record to match that by mid-November.

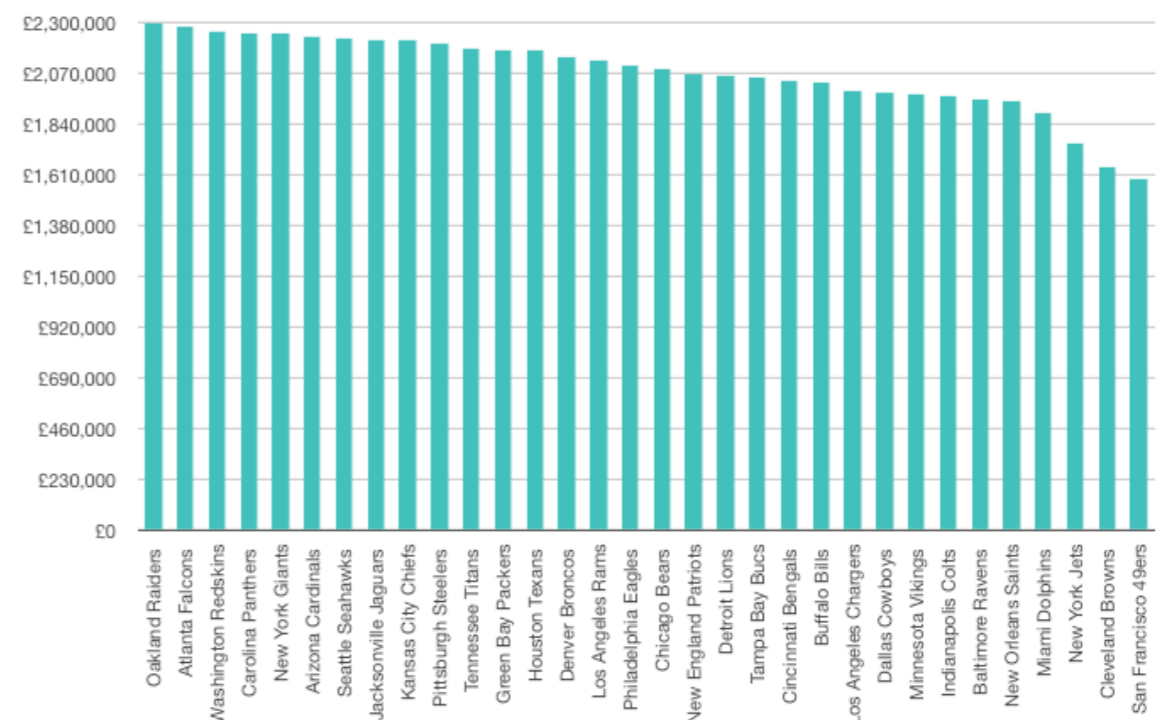
In the NFC, the Philadelphia Eagles were strolling along with an 8-1 record after nine games tally to their name – albeit with the New Orleans Saints, Minnesota Vikings and LA Rams all hot on their heels with 7-2 records.

At the other extreme of the performance scale, the Cleveland Browns in the AFC North and the San Francisco 49ers in the NFC West both began with nine straight losses. For the Browns it was a continuation of a dire 1-15 record in 2016 and will lead to their play-off absence hitting 15 years. The 49ers had only a marginally better 2016, with a win-loss of 2-14, and finally won their first game of 2017 at the 10th attempt, against the New York Giants.

If there was one unifying factor to the 2017 NFL, then it was arguably President Donald Trump, who alienated many as he urged owners to sack any 'son of a bitch' who took a knee at the national anthem, called the NFL 'boring' and 'failing' and urged supporters to boycott games where players exercised their democratic right to peaceful protest.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, NFL, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Oakland Raiders	£2,297,689	\$2,986,996
2	Atlanta Falcons	£2,288,342	\$2,974,845
3	Washington Redskins	£2,261,432	\$2,939,861
4	Carolina Panthers	£2,256,303	\$2,933,194
5	New York Giants	£2,254,297	\$2,930,586
6	Arizona Cardinals	£2,240,698	\$2,912,908
7	Seattle Seahawks	£2,230,023	\$2,899,031
8	Jacksonville Jaguars	£2,226,583	\$2,894,558
9	Kansas City Chiefs	£2,226,583	\$2,894,558
10	Pittsburgh Steelers	£2,206,011	\$2,867,815
11	Tennessee Titans	£2,185,950	\$2,841,735
12	Green Bay Packers	£2,177,713	\$2,831,027
13	Houston Texans	£2,177,713	\$2,831,027
14	Denver Broncos	£2,146,444	\$2,790,377
15	Los Angeles Rams	£2,132,283	\$2,771,968
16	Philadelphia Eagles	£2,112,022	\$2,745,628
17	Chicago Bears	£2,090,873	\$2,718,135
18	New England Patriots	£2,067,829	\$2,688,177
19	Detroit Lions	£2,060,116	\$2,678,150
20	Tampa Bay Bucs	£2,053,874	\$2,670,036
21	Cincinnati Bengals	£2,036,583	\$2,647,558
22	Buffalo Bills	£2,027,868	\$2,636,228
23	Los Angeles Chargers	£1,996,637	\$2,595,629
24	Dallas Cowboys	£1,989,289	\$2,586,075
25	Minnesota Vikings	£1,977,773	\$2,571,105
26	Indianapolis Colts	£1,971,297	\$2,562,686
27	Baltimore Ravens	£1,954,576	\$2,540,949
28	New Orleans Saints	£1,945,983	\$2,529,778
29	Miami Dolphins	£1,893,727	\$2,461,845
30	New York Jets	£1,757,952	\$2,285,338
31	Cleveland Browns	£1,644,663	\$2,138,062
32	San Francisco 49ers	£1,591,304	\$2,068,695



NFL ANALYSIS

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.4 TO 1

THREE OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 14 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE NFL SHOULD BE RELATIVELY COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

If you believe some of the naysayers, like President Trump, that the NFL is on a downer, then some balance is restored when you learn that even the 2017 draft was attended by a quarter of a million people in Philadelphia in April. That was an all-time high - for a meeting to select new players. The draft, along with the salary cap, and an algorithm-based scheduling formula that makes Legendre's conjecture seem straightforward, all contribute to assist competitive balance, as does the randomness-enhancing play-off system.

Eight different teams have won the Super Bowl over the past 10 years, with the Patriots and Giants the only ones to win twice in the period. Another five teams have been runners-up at least once in the period for a total of 13 different finalists of a maximum possible 20.

Only three leagues of 18 have a 'fairer' pay ratio between the best paid and worst paid teams, and while average salaries in the NFL still trail the other major US leagues (NBA, MLB and NHL), average pay has risen almost 11 per cent in a year, which is higher than in baseball and ice hockey.

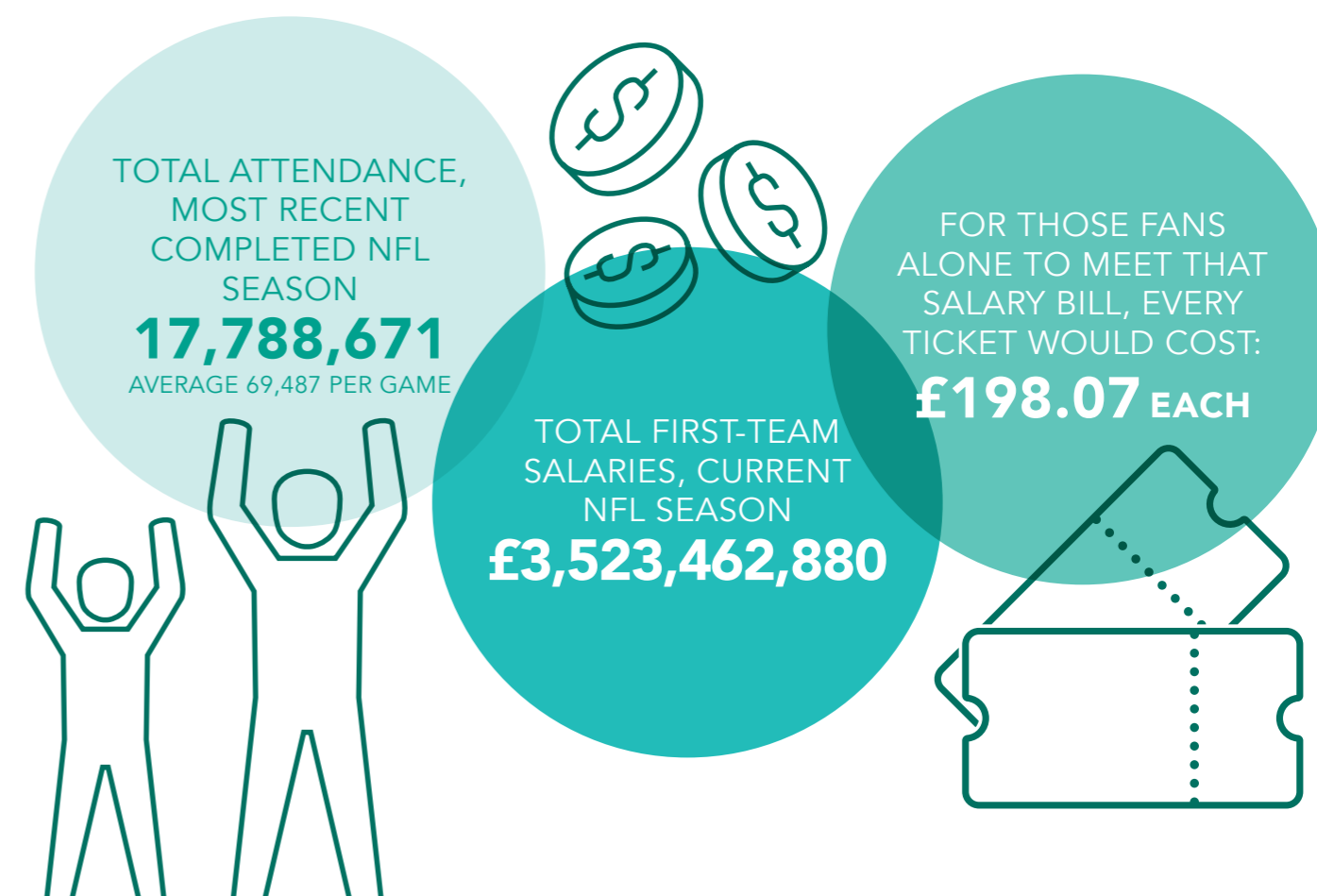
A figure of 'only' 5.5 per cent of NFL players are earning \$10m+ this season (against 27 per cent in the NBA and 16 per cent in MLB) but given the larger number of NFL players that still means 94 NFL players on active rosters at kick-off were on \$10m+ contracts for 2017.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, the Oakland Raiders, the Atlanta Falcons, the Washington Redskins, the Carolina Panthers and the New York Giants would be among those feeling confident about a berth in the post-season. At the other end, the San Francisco 49ers and the Cleveland Browns would be fretting for their campaigns before a game was played.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



LA LIGA ANALYSIS

SPANISH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:

£821,551,263
\$1,068,016,642

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:

No7 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:

£1,680,064
\$2,184,083

MEDIAN SALARY:

£839,930
\$1,091,909

THE STATE OF PLAY

La Liga 2017-18 was supposed to have been Real Madrid's to lose. Barcelona, apparently in crisis after the departure of Neymar and a lacklustre transfer window, should have been there for the taking. But after 11 games played before the November international break, the league table was telling a different story.

Barcelona sat a whopping eight points clear of their great rivals, who had recently been turned over 2-1 by the quintessentially Catalan Girona before being stunned by a rampant Tottenham Hotspur in a Champions League match at Wembley. (Girona, incidentally, now co-owned by the City Football Group empire that includes Manchester City and New York City FC) are in their first ever season in Spain's top division).

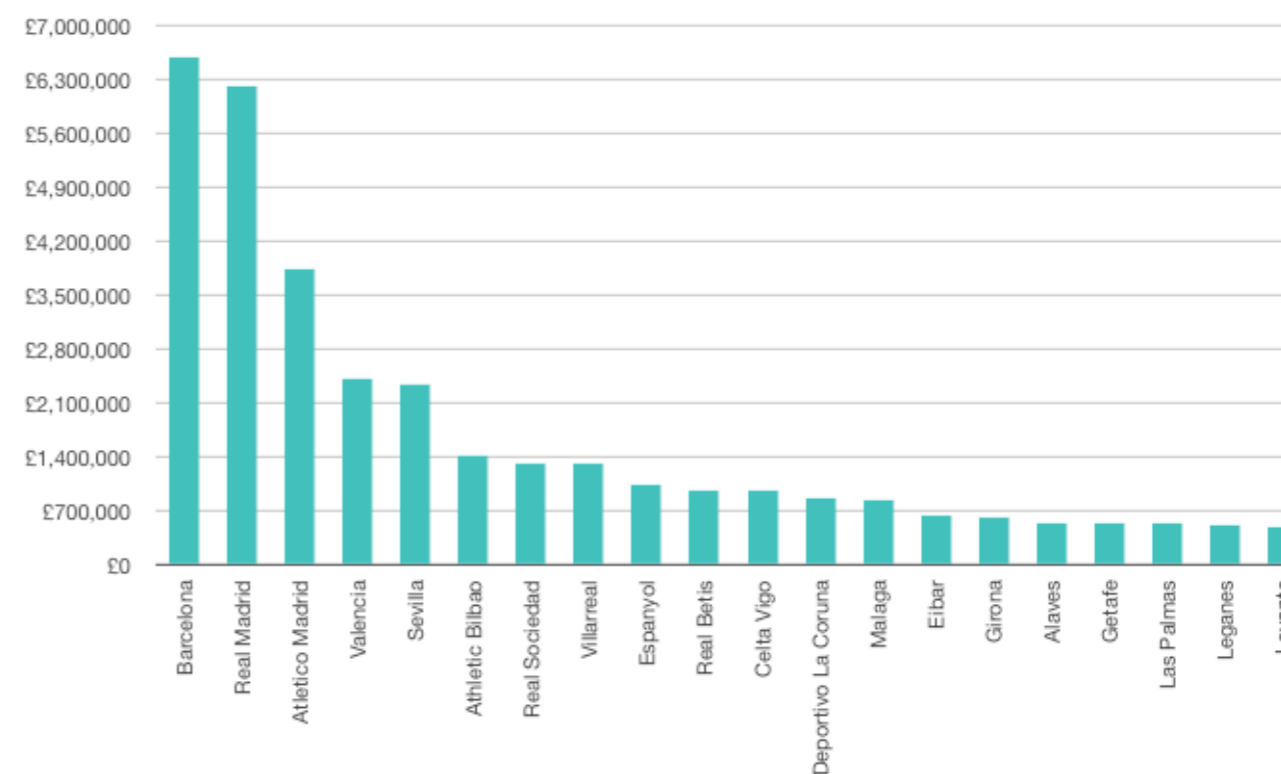
Barcelona, meanwhile, won 10 out of their first 11 games, lost none, scored 30 goals and appeared to have shrugged off the loss of Neymar and a long-term injury to their star recruit Ousmane Dembélé. The latter, age 20, had joined from Dortmund in a deal worth at least €105 million.

However, Ernesto Valverde's side, while clear of Madrid, were only half as far ahead (four points) of a reborn Valencia. After years of underachieving, the former La Liga giants appeared to have stumbled upon the magic formula with the appointment of Marcelino, also unbeaten after 11 games (eight wins).

Real's city rivals Atletico started the season expected to challenge, and were the third unbeaten side after 11 games, but an oddly lethargic start to the season was even more pronounced in Europe. Six league wins and five draws was fine if not super; three Champions League draws from the first four games (one at home to minnows Qarabag) and a defeat, also at home, was far from fine. That left them staring down the barrel of elimination from Europe's top competition before Christmas. One other development of note was Atletico began life in their new home, the 67,700-capacity Wanda Metropolitano.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, LA LIGA, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Barcelona	£6,597,500	\$8,576,750
2	Real Madrid	£6,224,833	\$8,092,283
3	Atletico Madrid	£3,849,130	\$5,003,870
4	Valencia	£2,429,818	\$3,158,764
5	Sevilla	£2,343,490	\$3,046,537
6	Athletic Bilbao	£1,419,500	\$1,845,350
7	Real Sociedad	£1,335,750	\$1,736,475
8	Villarreal	£1,326,115	\$1,723,950
9	Espanyol	£1,046,175	\$1,360,028
10	Real Betis	£978,504	\$1,272,056
11	Celta Vigo	£968,032	\$1,258,442
12	Deportivo La Coruna	£881,608	\$1,146,090
13	Malaga	£856,060	\$1,112,878
14	Eibar	£648,185	\$842,641
15	Girona	£617,283	\$802,468
16	Alaves	£560,444	\$728,578
17	Getafe	£544,781	\$708,215
18	Las Palmas	£537,863	\$699,222
19	Leganes	£523,274	\$680,256
20	Levante	£490,750	\$637,975



LA LIGA ANALYSIS

SPANISH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 13.4 TO 1

THIRTEEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; FOUR OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, LA LIGA IS RELATIVELY UNCOMPETITIVE, DOMINATED BY A FEW

ON BALANCE

The gulf between Spain's two giants and the rest is well known but if there were any doubt than you need only look at the official prescribed budget maximums for each club. Taking into account the forecast income for each club, the LFP, aka La Liga, makes an announcement each Autumn setting limits on spending. This year the list was published on 19 September. At one extreme Barcelona are allowed to spend £453m this season. At the other, Las Palmas can spend £26m. That is the competitive balance in a nutshell.

This budget includes all spending 'in relation to players, the manager, assistant manager and fitness coach ... and on the reserves, the youth system and other areas [including] fixed and variable wages, social security, collective bonuses, acquisition costs (including commissions for agents).'

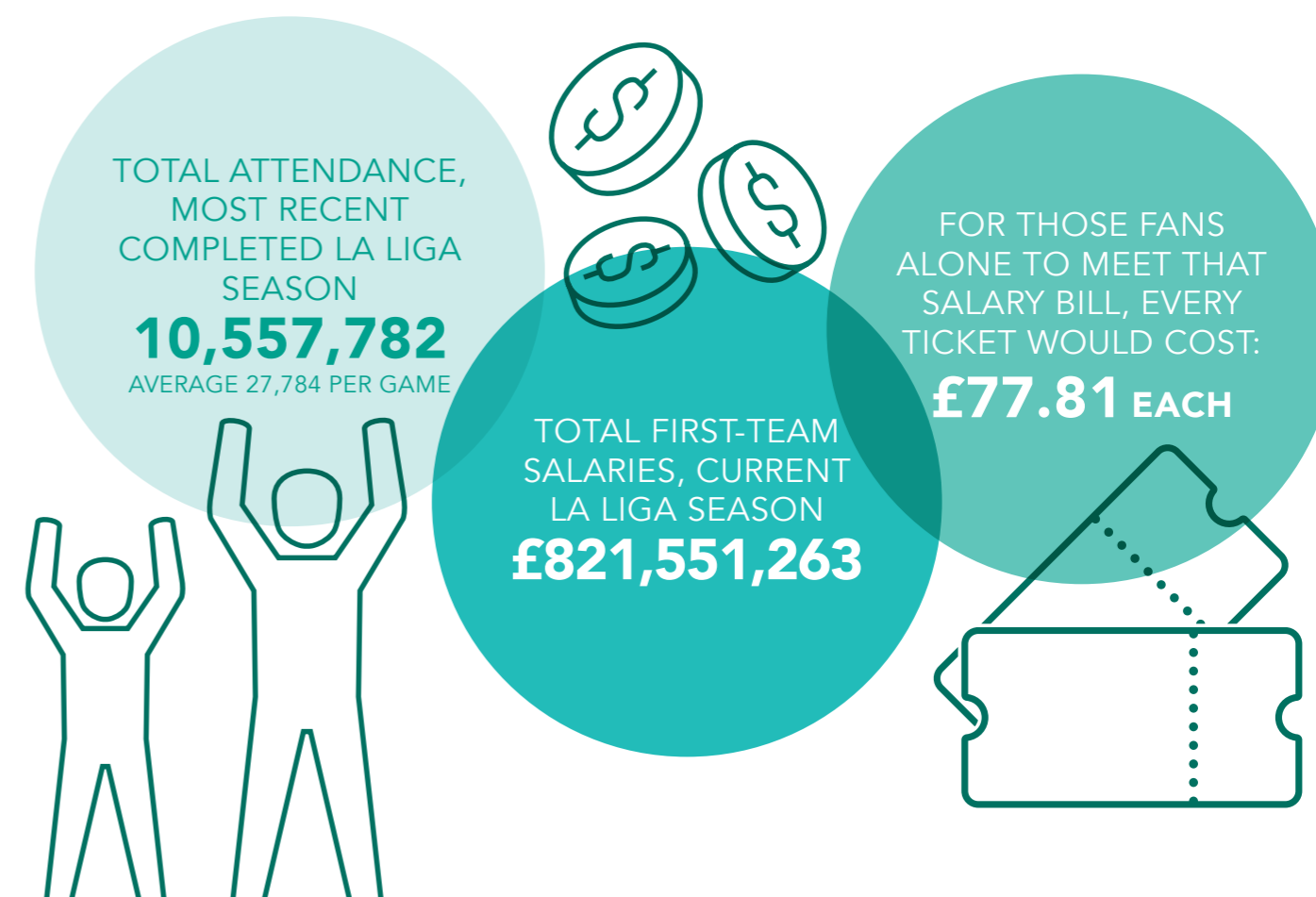
Barcelona's allowable spending (and Real are just £7m behind) is bigger than that of Real Sociedad, Espanyol, Malaga, Celta Vigo, Deportivo, Alaves, Leganes, Eibar, Levante, Getafe, Girona and Las Palmas, combined. On this basis it is almost a surprise there have been as many as three La Liga winners over the past decade, Atletico winning from Barca in 2013-14. In the nine other seasons it was either a Barca-Real Madrid 1-2, or vice versa.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks then Barcelona will win the title from Real Madrid with Atletico Madrid in third and Valencia and Sevilla engaged in a ding-dong scrap for fourth and fifth. At the other end, you could expect to perm three from nine to be relegated from 12th place down in the pay ranks: from Deportivo, Malaga, Eibar, Girona, Alaves, Getafe, Las Palmas, Leganes and Levante.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
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MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



SERIE A ANALYSIS

ITALIAN TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£706,541,333
\$918,503,733

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No8 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£1,325,593
\$1,723,272

MEDIAN SALARY:
£741,667
\$964,167

THE STATE OF PLAY

Juventus landed a record-setting sixth consecutive Serie A title in 2016-17 to take their all-time tally of titles to 33 and extend their lead as Italy's most frequent champions over Milan and Inter (both on 18). Whether they will make it to seventh heaven is less certain after a rivetingly competitive opening dozen games of the 2017-18 season, before the November international break. At that stage just two points separated the top three, headed by Napoli, a point ahead of Juve and they in turn a point ahead of Inter. Lazio and Roma at that stage each had a game in hand that could have taken either of them into the top three.

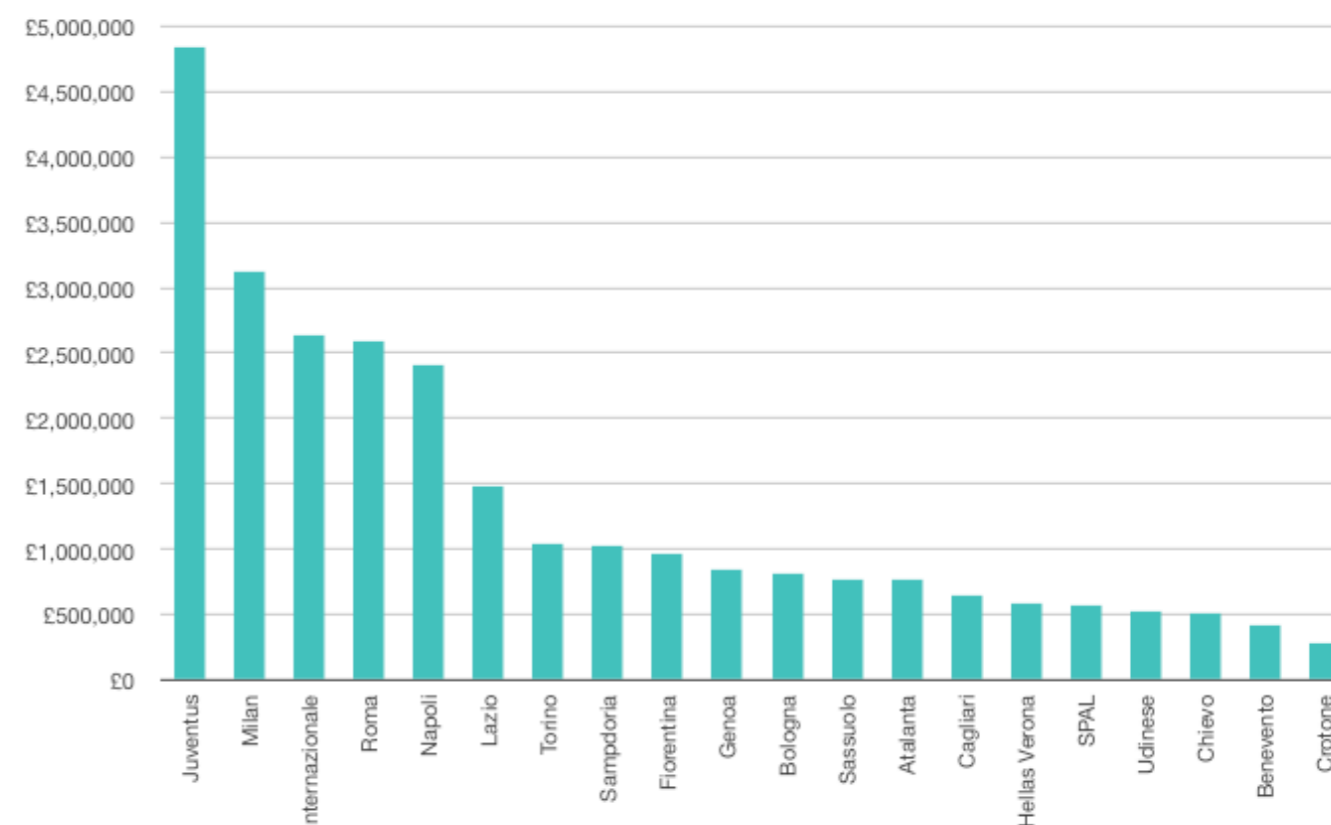
Maurizio Sarri's Napoli side have come to be regarded as one of the most exciting teams in European football, playing a high tempo game of devastating quick passing, showcasing the talents of Slovakian maestro Marek Hamsik and the stunning goalscoring form of the Belgian Dries Mertens.

But Juventus remain favourites at the time of writing, able to call upon the deadly finishing of Gonzalo Higuain and the lethal set pieces of Miralem Pjanic while relying on Gianluigi Buffon between the posts.

The anti-climax team of the early season were undoubtedly Milan, who spent almost €200m on new players, an outlay that dwarfed their rivals. New Chinese owners had pledged to invest whatever was necessary to return Milan to the glories of past years but despite the high profile capture of Leonardo Bonucci from Juve, and huge sums spent on Andre Silva, Andrea Conti and others, they were as close to the relegation zone after 12 games (13 points away) as they were to the top. Among the smaller clubs, SPAL started robustly in their first season in the top flight since 1968 but the fate of Benevento looked sealed after 12 games, 12 straight defeats, no points, and 31 goals conceded.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, SERIE A, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Juventus	£4,853,467	\$6,309,507
2	Milan	£3,135,877	\$4,076,640
3	Internazionale	£2,637,754	\$3,429,080
4	Roma	£2,598,580	\$3,378,154
5	Napoli	£2,414,867	\$3,139,327
6	Lazio	£1,488,278	\$1,934,761
7	Torino	£1,052,596	\$1,368,375
8	Sampdoria	£1,039,981	\$1,351,976
9	Fiorentina	£974,605	\$1,266,986
10	Genoa	£848,679	\$1,103,282
11	Bologna	£821,538	\$1,068,000
12	Sassuolo	£769,214	\$999,979
13	Atalanta	£769,136	\$999,877
14	Cagliari	£653,903	\$850,074
15	Hellas Verona	£597,728	\$777,047
16	SPAL	£576,218	\$749,083
17	Udinese	£534,511	\$694,865
18	Chievo	£522,019	\$678,625
19	Benevento	£427,885	\$556,250
20	Crotone	£292,575	\$380,347



SERIE A ANALYSIS

ITALIAN TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 16.6 TO 1

FOURTEEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; THREE OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, SERIE A IS AMONG THE LEAST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Juventus salary at the top of the Serie A pay list (£4.86m) and the average Crotone salary at the bottom (£292,000) is huge. Juventus could take their basic first-team pay budget and pay the wages of every player in the bottom eight teams and still have £5m to spare.

Serie A salaries are up around 18 per cent on average over the year (in terms of pounds), and while about half of that is down to currency fluctuation, a lot of it is down to increased spending at the top end of the division, including by Juve, Milan (hugely), Inter and Napoli.

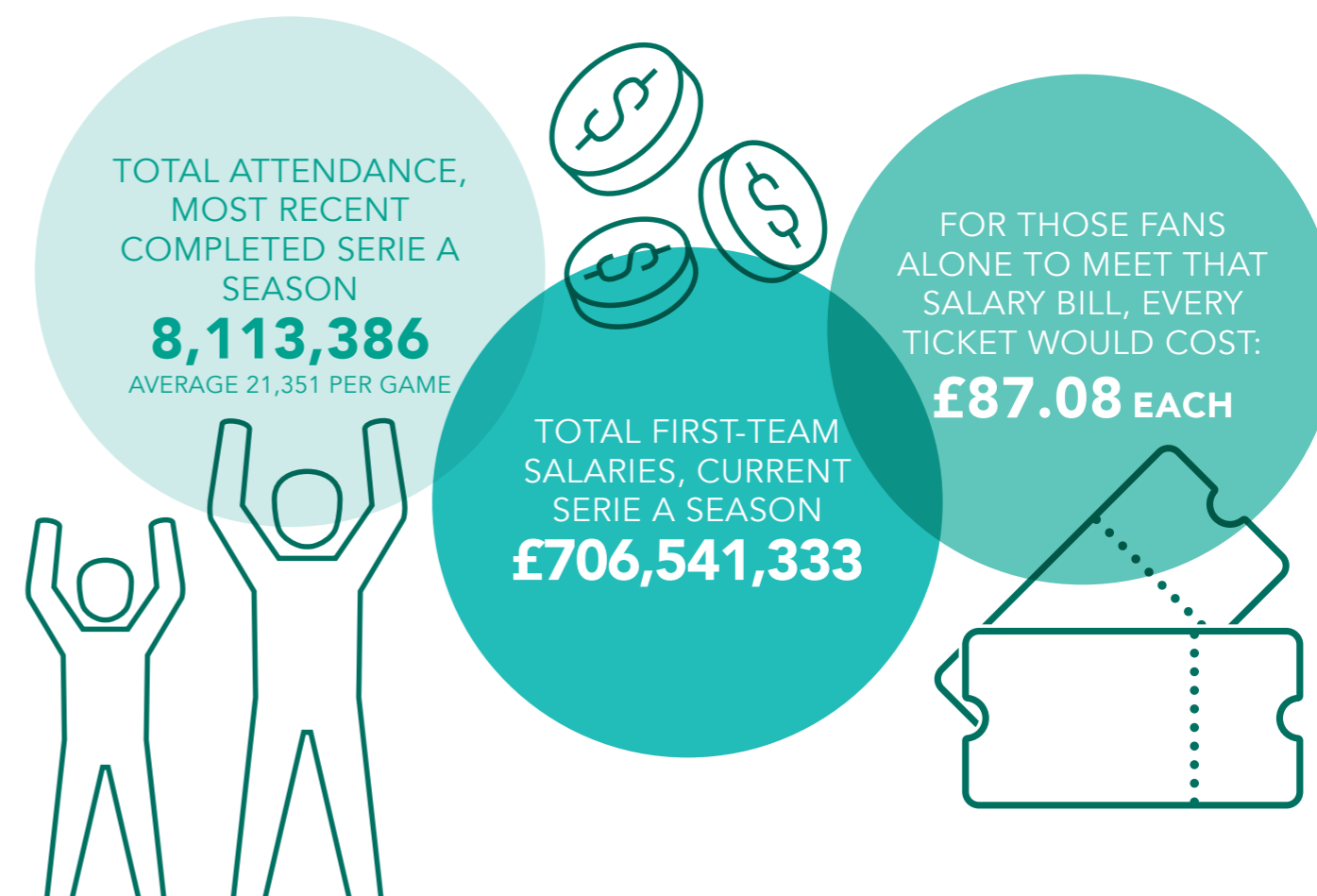
Serie A has had three different winners in the past 10 years, with Milan winning the title before Juve's six in a row, then Inter winning five in a row before that. That trio have won all the titles in the past 16 years between them. And only two others, Roma and Napoli, have finished in the top two in the same period. So five teams have split the combined 32 top-two places available since 2001-02.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then Juventus will claim a record-extending seventh straight title with Milan as runners-up, followed by Inter, Roma, Napoli and Lazio. It really would not be a surprise to see a final top six comprising that group in some order. On wages alone then Crotone, Benevento and Chievo would go down but Udinese, SPAL and Verona are not spending much more and another half a dozen could be vulnerable.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
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AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



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BUNDESLIGA ANALYSIS

GERMAN TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£623,914,904
\$811,089,375

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No9 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£1,255,362
\$1,631,971

MEDIAN SALARY:
£738,400
\$959,920

THE STATE OF PLAY

The sacking of Carlo Ancelotti after a slow start to Bayern Munich's season, the slump culminating in a 3-0 Champions League battering at the hands Paris Saint-Germain, prompted talk of a Dortmund resurgence. Peter Bosz took charge at the Westfalenstadion over the summer after an impressive run to the Europa League final with his young Ajax side and the early running pointed to a vintage season for his club. But an alarming downturn in form from mid-October, domestically and in the Champions League, left a reinvigorated Bayern under the experienced Jupp Heynckes back at the summit after 11 games before the November international break.

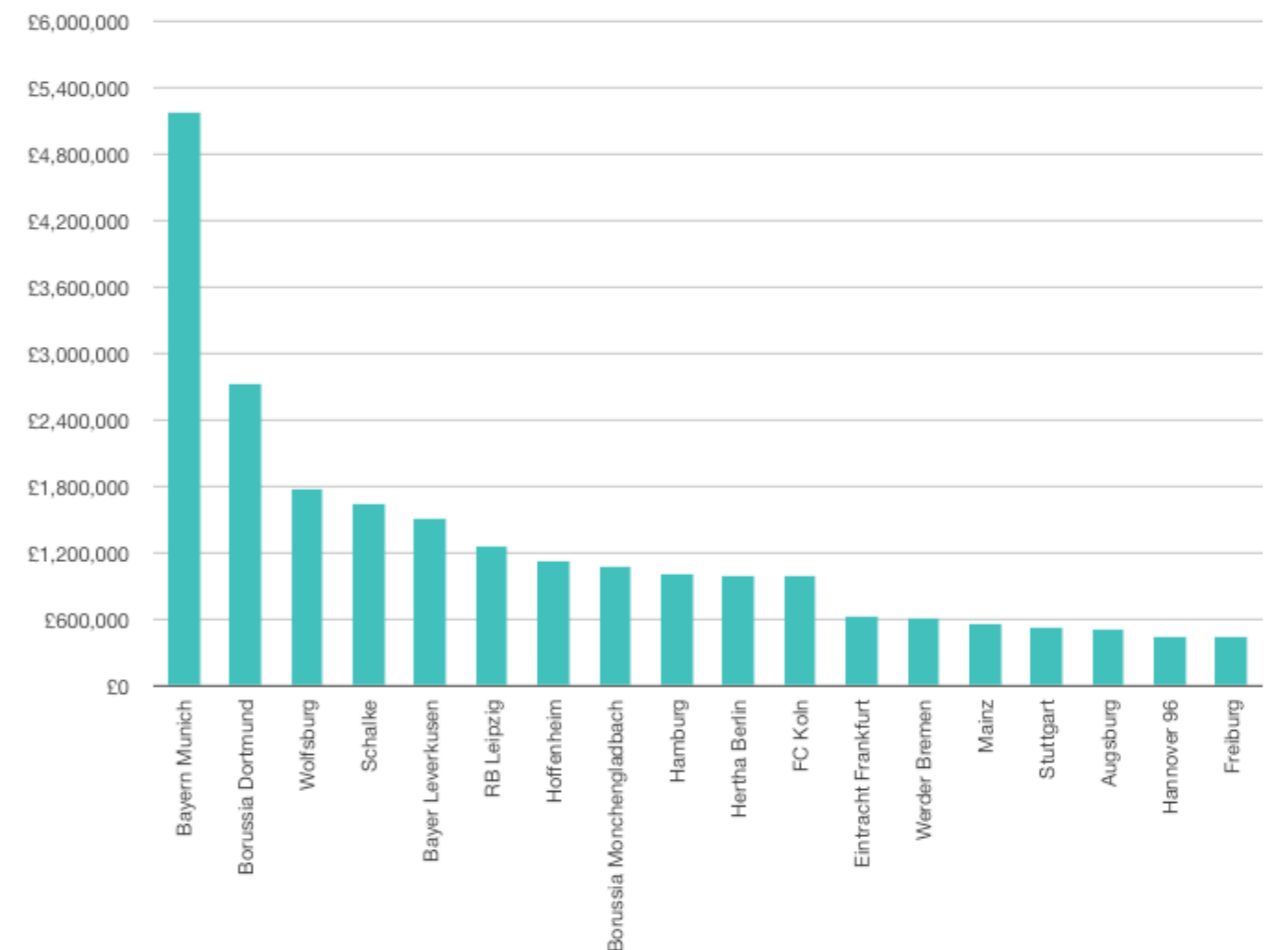
Indeed, 72 year-old Heynckes led his charges to an impressive 3-1 at Dortmund, sparking concerns that Bosz's tactical inflexibility will spell the end of a title run. Other serious challenges to the Bavarian juggernaut Bayern would seem most likely to come from Ralph Hasenhuettl's RB Leipzig - the team that so many German football fans love to hate - with Schalke and Hoffenheim starting steadily behind them. The Red Bull-bankrolled Leipzig will hope the pacey goal threat of Timo Werner and the wing trickery of Sweden's Emil Forsberg can help their push.

At the foot of the Bundesliga in the early months, FC Koln and their fabulous travelling fans looked in danger of being cut adrift with the once reliable Werder Bremen also struggling.

The season kicked-off against a healthy financial backdrop (not that they'd want to talk it up, when that's what the crass English do), as a new four-year €4.64bn TV deal came online, worth 85 per cent more than the previous deal and giving clubs more to invest across the board to challenge richer Euro rivals.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, BUNDESLIGA, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Bayern Munich	£5,184,038	\$6,739,250
2	Borussia Dortmund	£2,739,148	\$3,560,893
3	Wolfsburg	£1,778,261	\$2,311,740
4	Schalke	£1,654,052	\$2,150,268
5	Bayer Leverkusen	£1,518,400	\$1,973,920
6	RB Leipzig	£1,269,382	\$1,650,197
7	Hoffenheim	£1,125,415	\$1,463,039
8	Borussia Monchengladbach	£1,076,586	\$1,399,561
9	Hamburg	£1,014,018	\$1,318,223
10	Hertha Berlin	£1,000,350	\$1,300,455
11	FC Koln	£992,250	\$1,289,925
12	Eintracht Frankfurt	£638,471	\$830,013
13	Werder Bremen	£621,214	\$807,579
14	Mainz	£562,855	\$731,712
15	Stuttgart	£538,400	\$699,920
16	Augsburg	£517,021	\$672,127
17	Hannover 96	£449,966	\$584,956
18	Freiburg	£448,718	\$583,334



BUNDESLIGA ANALYSIS

GERMAN TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 11.6 TO 1

TWELVE OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; FIVE OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE BUNDESLIGA IS AMONG THE LEAST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Bayern Munich salary at the top of the Bundesliga pay list (£5.2m) and the average Freiburg salary at the bottom (£458,000) is the starkest sign of a great divide. But the new TV money is one reason that top-to-bottom ratio is now 'only' 11.6 to one, against almost 14 to 1 last season, as each club has more to spend, with the poorest clubs relatively better off.

Our survey shows no fewer than 10 of the 18 Bundesliga clubs now having average first-team pay of £1m or more, up from five last season with a sixth almost there. None of the three lowest spenders last season averaged more than £350,000 per year per player while this year the bottom figure is £448,718 and the third bottom more than half a million. The average salary is up almost 19 per cent year-on-year (in pounds) and while some of that is currency fluctuation, the new TV deal is making a difference.

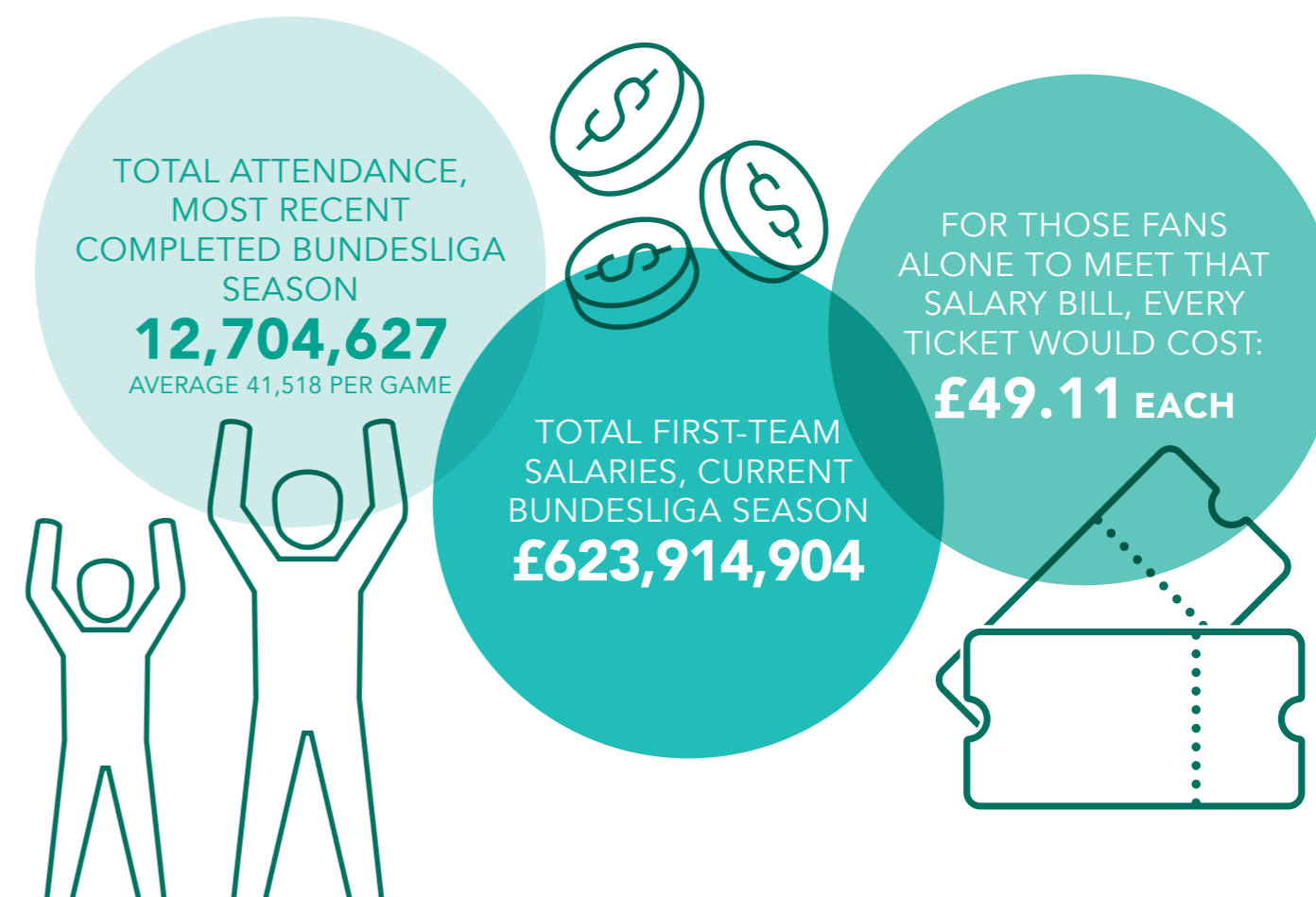
Enough difference to topple Bayern? They have won seven of the last 10 Bundesliga titles and all of the last five, with only Dortmund in 2011 and 2012, and Wolfsburg, in 2009, interrupting their decade of dominance. Leipzig, Leverkusen, Schalke and Werder Bremen have in addition been runners-up in the period.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then it's Bayern for six in a row ahead of Dortmund, Wolfsburg and Schalke, with Leverkusen, Leipzig and Hoffenheim in the top seven. Finances alone would dictate that Freiburg, Hannover, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Mainz and Werder Bremen will be scrapping - although the season hasn't conformed to expectation.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
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J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



LIGUE 1 ANALYSIS

FRENCH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£492,979,272
\$640,873,054

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No10 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£944,405
\$1,227,726

MEDIAN SALARY:
£429,000
\$557,700

THE STATE OF PLAY

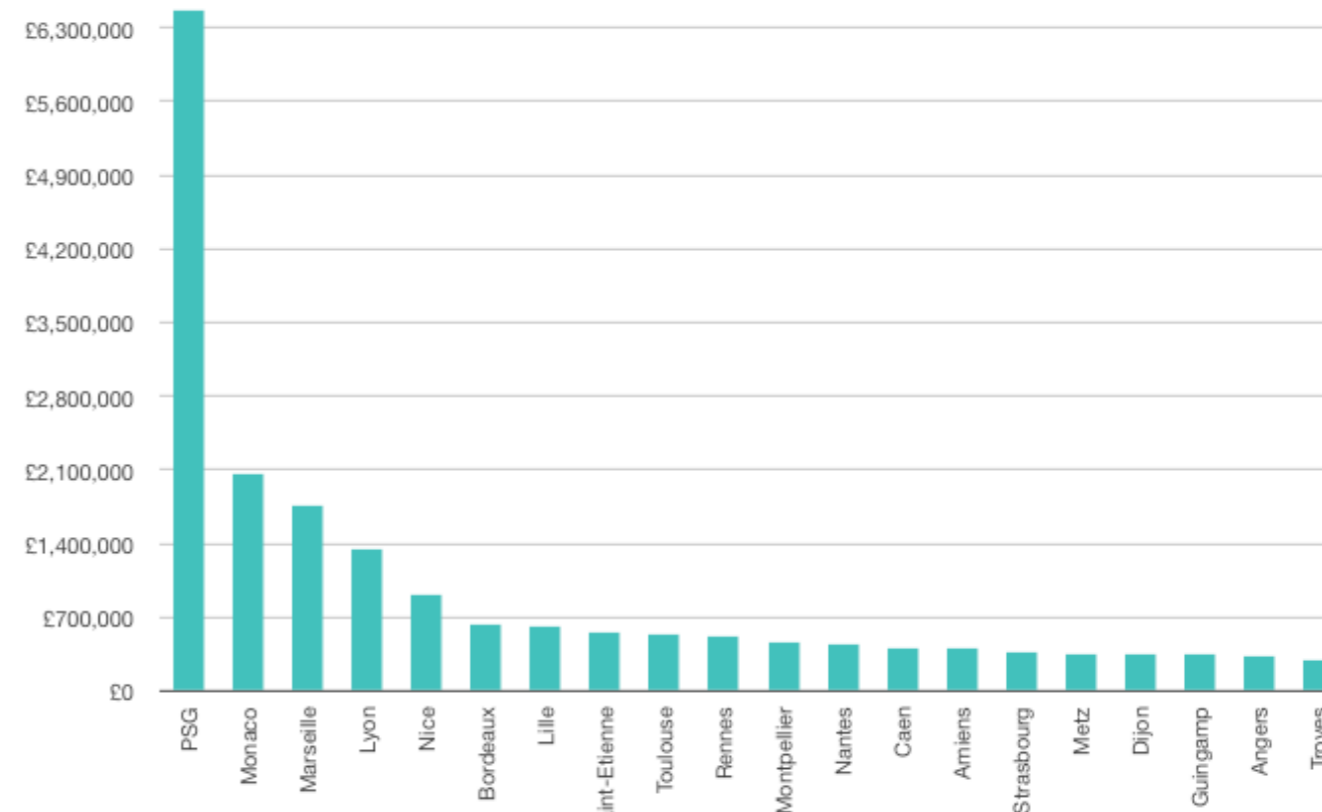
Paris Saint-Germain stunned football in August when they obliterated the world transfer record by paying €222m for the transfer of Neymar from Barcelona. To say it was acrimonious is to understate it - Barcelona tried to prevent it, but PSG had triggered a release clause so couldn't be stopped. Then Javier Tebas, the president of the Spanish league, insisted that he would take PSG to court. His argument was PSG were in flagrant breach of UEFA's 'financial fair play' (FFP) rules - designed to stop clubs spending money they don't legitimately generate themselves.

PSG's potential wealth, unprecedented in French football, or any football, via their Qatari owners, hadn't prevented them from losing the title in 2016-17. So in addition to Neymar they doubled down and did a deal to buy French teenage wonder kid, Kylian Mbappé, from their closest rivals (and reigning champions) Monaco. Cue more controversy. If they paid the agreed €180m for him in summer 2017, they would inevitably break the FFP rules so they concocted a loan deal instead. Cue more opprobrium, and an official investigation by UEFA into whether PSG are gaming the system - or blatantly trying to 'buy' success in contravention of FFP. That probe is ongoing at the time of writing.

What isn't in doubt is that such lavish spending allowed PSG to gather some stellar talents who immediately became odds-on favourites to romp to the title. And in their first dozen games of 2017-18, they began with 10 wins, two draws, no defeats and scored 39 goals. The Edinson Cavani-Neymar-Mbappé trio had scored 24 of those between them. The questions seemed to be not whether PSG would be crowned Ligue 1 winners, but how early they'd confirm it - and whether UEFA would allow it.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, LIGUE 1, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	PSG	£6,472,355	\$8,414,061
2	Monaco	£2,067,929	\$2,688,307
3	Marseille	£1,769,700	\$2,300,610
4	Lyon	£1,354,704	\$1,761,115
5	Nice	£915,007	\$1,189,510
6	Bordeaux	£643,032	\$835,942
7	Lille	£620,691	\$806,898
8	Saint-Etienne	£568,341	\$738,843
9	Toulouse	£536,500	\$697,450
10	Rennes	£520,686	\$676,892
11	Montpellier	£464,500	\$603,850
12	Nantes	£458,081	\$595,506
13	Caen	£416,770	\$541,801
14	Amiens	£409,067	\$531,787
15	Strasbourg	£378,393	\$491,911
16	Metz	£366,889	\$476,956
17	Dijon	£365,100	\$474,630
18	Guingamp	£355,500	\$462,150
19	Angers	£346,900	\$450,970
20	Troyes	£300,541	\$390,703



LIGUE 1 ANALYSIS

FRENCH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 21.5 TO 1

SEVENTEEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; NONE OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, LIGUE 1 IS THE LEAST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average PSG salary at the top of the Ligue 1 pay list (£6.5m) and the average Troyes salary at the bottom (£300,000) is bigger in relative terms than the difference between the best and worst paid teams in any league in this report. Troyes happen to have come out bottom but it might well have been Amiens if they didn't have loanees from much richer clubs bumping their average pay: Nathan from Chelsea, Gael Kakuta from the CSL and Lacina Traore to name but three. (Average first-team pay accounts for the players' earnings, not specifically who pays what proportionate of it. Pay in this regard is a proxy for talent).

Actually for Troyes, read Angers, Guingamp, Dijon, Metz or Strasbourg, all 'small budget' teams compared to PSG, who dwarf them all. Their squads are each operating on basic wage bills of under £10m - as PSG spend closer to £160m, with potentially big bonuses on top.

PSG will spend about as much on wages as the 14 smallest Ligue 1 budgets combined. The best paid 10 per cent of Ligue 1 players (dominated by PSG players) earn 52 per cent of the division's wages.

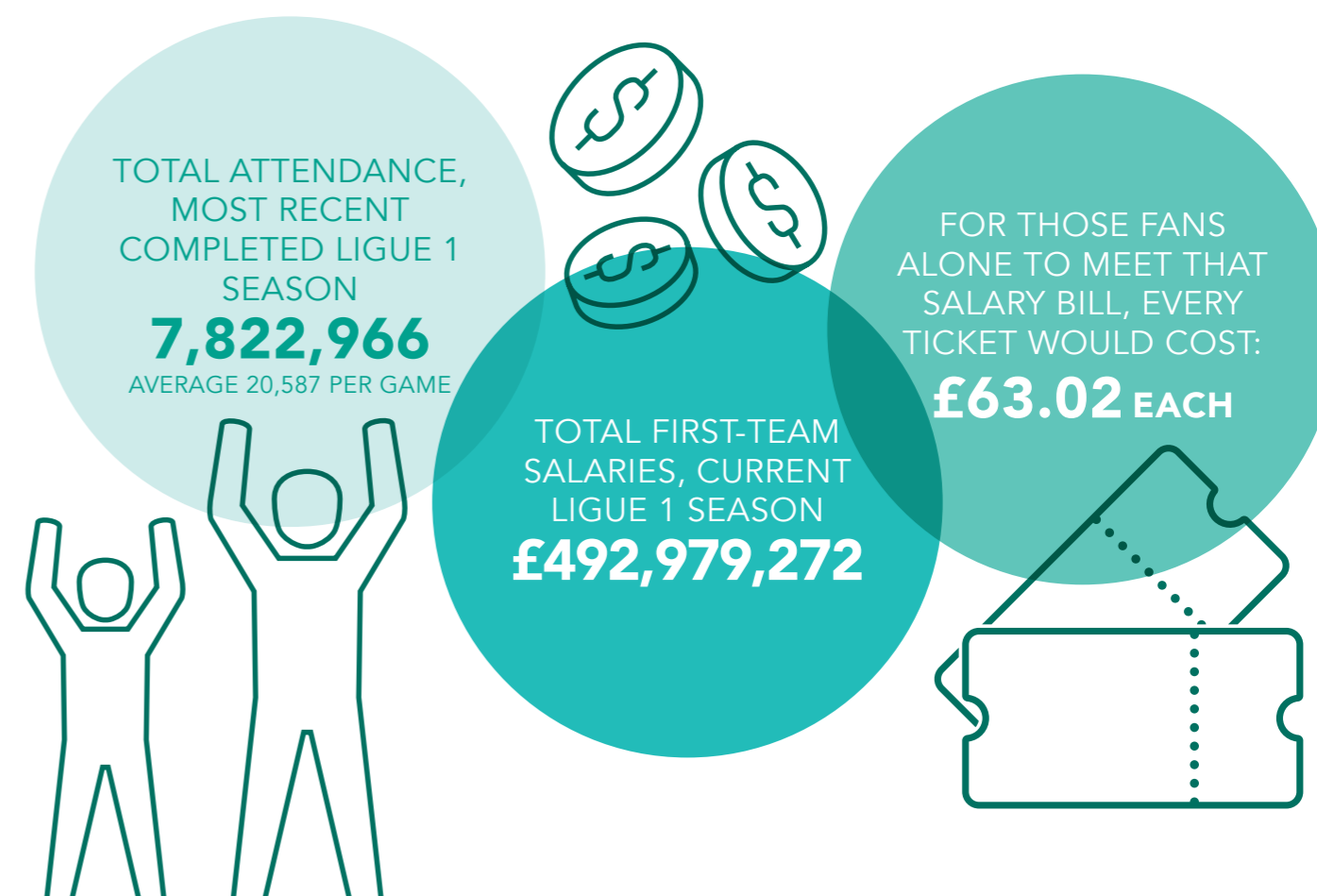
Money doesn't guarantee success: last season showed that. But it influences it hugely. In the five seasons before the oil wealth flowed into PSG, Ligue 1 had five different winners: in reverse order Montpellier, Lille, Marseille, Bordeaux, Lyon. In the five seasons since? PSG, PSG, PSG, PSG, and Monaco (a.k.a, a blip).

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then PSG will win the title. And three from those six 'small budget teams' will go down.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
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CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
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NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



CSL ANALYSIS

CHINESE SUPER LEAGUE FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£387,081,999
\$503,206,599

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No11 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£781,984
\$1,016,579

MEDIAN SALARY:
£153,333
\$199,333

THE STATE OF PLAY

The CSL has braced for financial recalibration after the Chinese government via the nation's football association (the CFA) effectively applied the brakes to the rampant spending starting to take hold. Big names on salaries of tens of millions of dollars continued to move to China in 2017, with Brazil's Oscar (to Shanghai SIPG) and Argentinean forward Carlos Tevez (to Shanghai Shenhua) among them. Both expressed regret within months, but that is another issue.

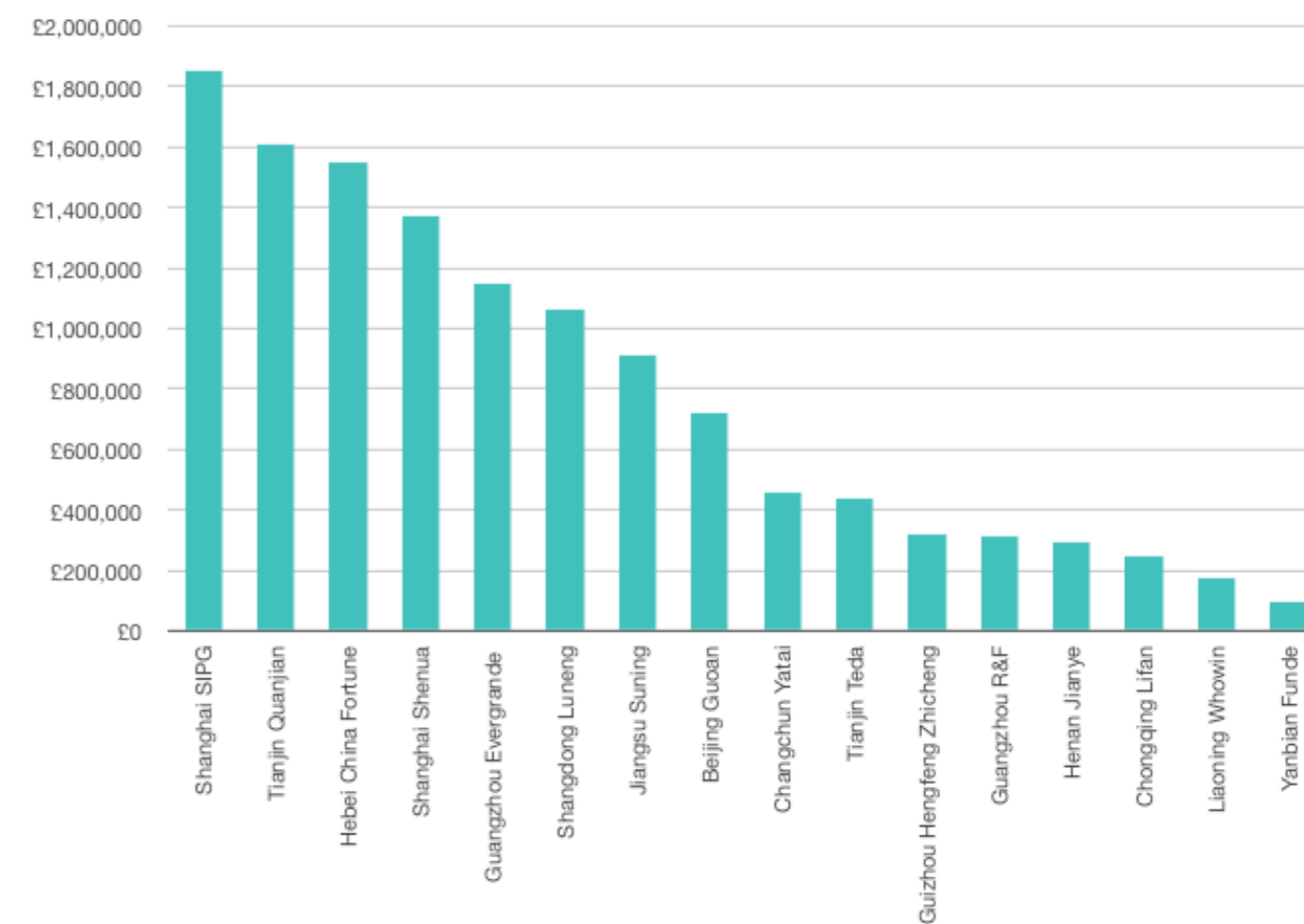
It seemed obvious a group of CSL clubs must be haemorrhaging money; there is no evidence that current revenues from tickets, TV or commercial deals can pay the ballooning wage bills. A remarkable document, recently published, allows some insight into this theory and vindicates it.

The document is the official 2016 financial report of Guangzhou Evergrande, who have won the seven most recent CSL seasons (2011 to 2017) and two AFC Champions Leagues (2013, 2015). Evergrande are co-owned by the Evergrande Group (whose chairman is Xu Jiayin, one of China's richest multi-billionaires) and the Alibaba Group (exec chair, Jack Ma, ditto), companies with stupendous resources. The report, in Chinese, can be found in the resources section of the Sporting Intelligence website. [CLICK HERE](#)

It is long, complex and fascinating and the upshot is this: China's wealthiest and most successful club by a mile had revenue in 2016 of about £64m (of which £46m was from commercial deals, £12m from TV, £5.5m from tickets and the balance from merchandise), operating costs of around £157m (with 'employee benefits', mainly wages for all staff, being more than £100m) and losses of around £93m. The GSSS 2016 had Evergrande as one of five clubs paying more than £1m per year per first-team player in average, and one of four paying £1.4m to £1.5m per man. The GSSS 2017 calculates their wage bill has fallen as others have risen. Evergrande's accounts describe an 'arms race' of spending. It is not sustainable in any rational economic environment.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, CSL, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Shanghai SIPG	£1,853,942	\$2,410,125
2	Tianjin Quanjian	£1,612,198	\$2,095,857
3	Hebei China Fortune	£1,551,731	\$2,017,250
4	Shanghai Shenhua	£1,375,986	\$1,788,781
5	Guangzhou Evergrande	£1,149,117	\$1,493,852
6	Shandong Luneng	£1,066,564	\$1,386,533
7	Jiangsu Suning	£914,904	\$1,189,375
8	Beijing Guoan	£724,938	\$942,419
9	Changchun Yatai	£457,308	\$594,500
10	Tianjin Teda	£442,382	\$575,097
11	Guizhou Hengfeng Zhicheng	£323,623	\$420,710
12	Guangzhou R&F	£314,543	\$408,906
13	Henan Jianye	£296,490	\$385,437
14	Chongqing Lifan	£248,923	\$323,600
15	Liaoning Whowin	£180,129	\$234,168
16	Yanbian Fude	£99,048	\$128,762



CSL ANALYSIS

CHINESE SUPER LEAGUE FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 18.7 TO 1

SIXTEEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; ONE OF 18 IS LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE CSL HAS BEEN UNCOMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The imbalance in wage spending from top to bottom makes it virtually impossible for the lesser clubs to compete. The richest teams have some of the most successful managers in the world and multiple major players typically from Brazil or Argentina. The "stars" in poorer teams are relatively unheralded players from lower-ranked European and African nations.

Evidently the authorities in China saw lavish spending by some clubs to be a potential problem, if not for competitive reasons then for financial stability. A crisis seemed imminent when the CFA wrote to 18 Chinese clubs in the summer, 13 of them in the CSL, to threaten bans if they did not settle outstanding debts and pay late wages and bonuses. The clubs mostly claimed all was well; lack of transparency means that cannot be independently verified. The CFA introduced a new rule that a maximum of three foreign players could appear per team in a game (to deter big-name, high-cost imports) and that two 'young' (under 23) local players should be in each 18-man match day squad.

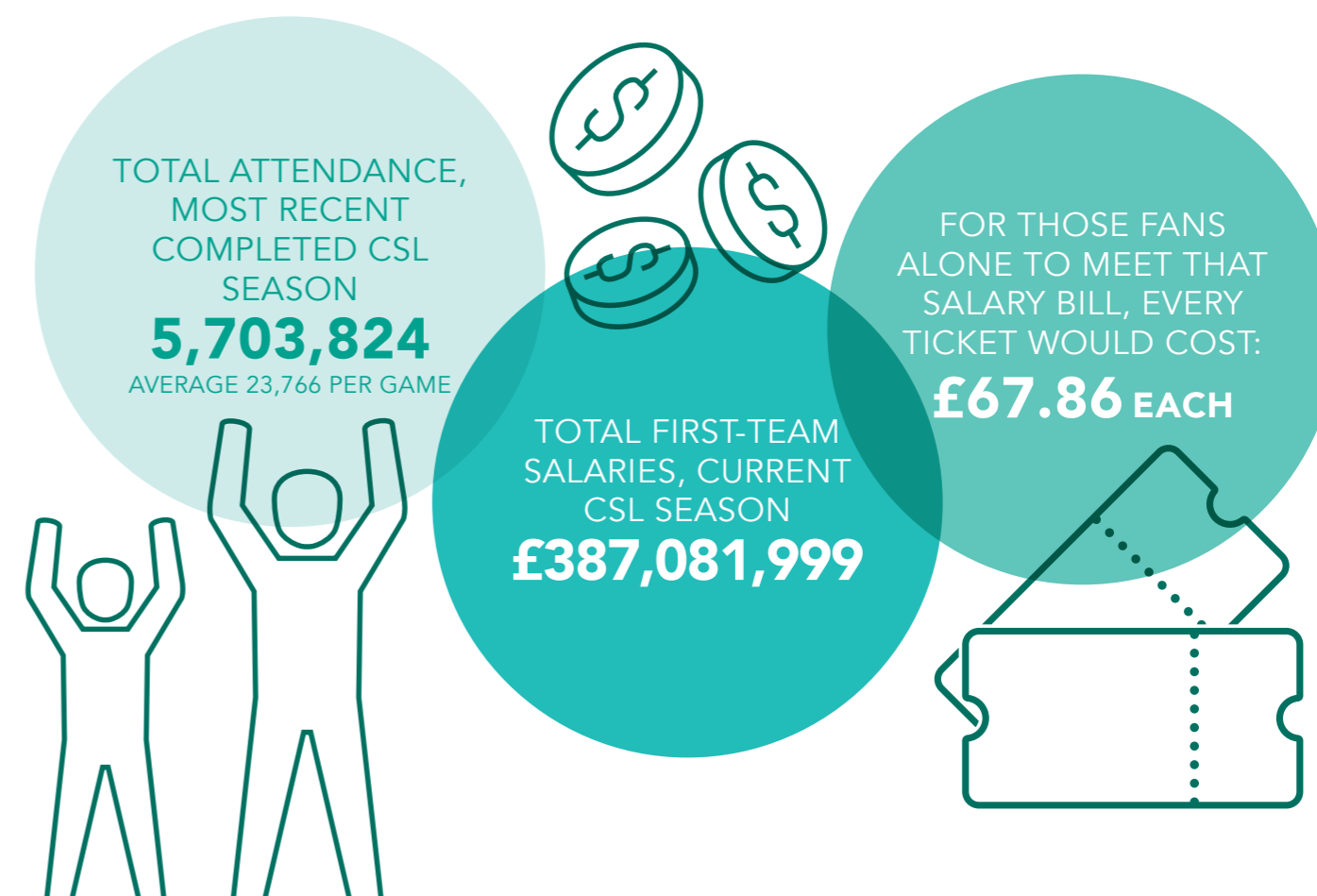
This may or may not level things up. But the CSL remains by far the most 'top heavy' league in pay terms with the top 10 per cent of players (led by the big foreign names) earning 75 per cent of all wages. The CSL has more players earning \$10m+ in basic pay than any football league in the world bar the Premier League.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talked, then Shanghai SIPG would have won the title from Tianjin Quanjian, Hebei China Fortune, Shanghai Shenhua, Guangzhou Evergrande and Shangdong Luneng. In fact they respectively finished 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 11th, 1st and 6th. Money alone would have dictated that Yanbian Fude, Liaoning Whowin, Chongqing Lifan and Henan Jianye would finish in the bottom four. Three of them did fill the bottom three, and Lifan were 10th - or seventh from bottom.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
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NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



NPB ANALYSIS

NIPPON PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£235,683,662
\$306,388,761

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No12 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£654,677
\$851,080

MEDIAN SALARY:
£352,113
\$457,747

THE STATE OF PLAY

Arcane as the NPB's league and play-off structure is, the 2017 Japan Series was nonetheless won by the outstanding team of the regular season. The Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, who had a 65.7 per cent win rate, beat the sixth-best team (Yokohama DeNA BayStars, 52.9 per cent) in the six-game final series, 4-2.

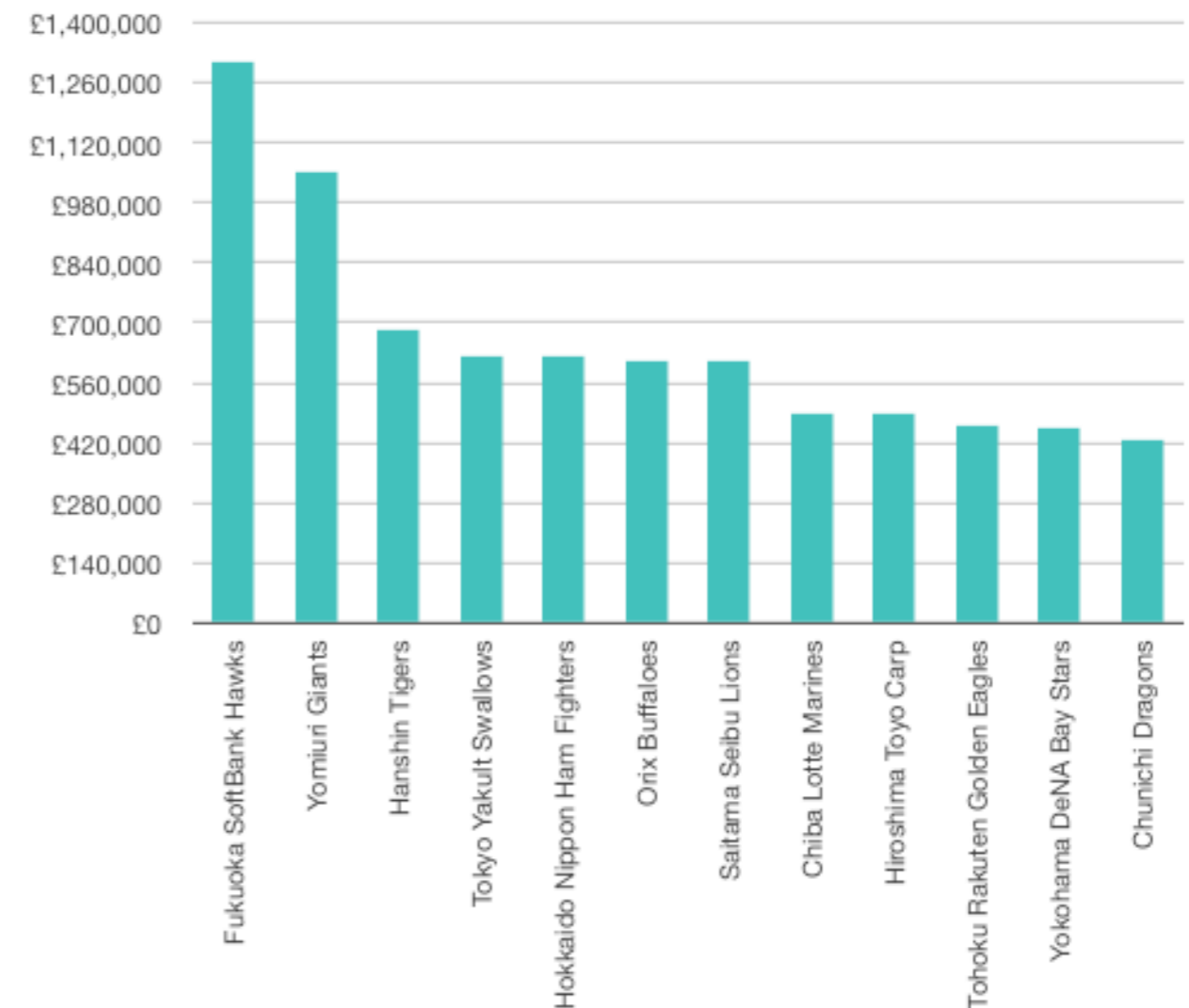
After 143 games of the regular season, the Hawks were comfortable winners of the Pacific League – with 94 wins and 49 losses they were clear winners from the Saitama Seibu Lions. Their opponents in the Japan Series did not, however, enjoy such dominance in their league. Indeed, the BayStars could only finish third in the Central League behind the Hiroshima Toyo Carp and Hanshin Tigers.

The Hawks' ultimate success must, in part, be attributable to Cuba's Alfredo Despaigne who led the way in the Pacific League with 35 home runs and 103 RBIs. His snappy nickname is 'El Caballo de los Caballos' or 'The Stallion of the Stallions'. He was one of seven Hawks players among the best-paid dozen players in the NPB in 2017, earning around £2.8m. Another overseas player and team-mate, pitcher Dennis Sarfate of the USA, won the Japan Series MVP award and was the joint highest paid player in the NPB in 2017, earning just over £3.5m.

At the conclusion of the regular season, the three top-placed teams in each league enter the climax series for their respective leagues. It was here that the BayStars would belie their third place finish to come out on top. The Hawks enjoyed a more sedate route to the Japan series, beating the Tohoku Golden Eagles 4-2 before seeing off the BayStars by the same margin.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, NPB, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks	£1,310,563	\$1,703,732
2	Yomiuri Giants	£1,051,486	\$1,366,932
3	Hanshin Tigers	£686,549	\$892,514
4	Tokyo Yakult Swallows	£626,432	\$814,362
5	Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters	£623,592	\$810,669
6	Orix Buffaloes	£615,634	\$800,324
7	Saitama Seibu Lions	£611,385	\$794,800
8	Chiba Lotte Marines	£490,423	\$637,549
9	Hiroshima Toyo Carp	£488,979	\$635,673
10	Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles	£465,023	\$604,531
11	Yokohama DeNA Bay Stars	£455,869	\$592,629
12	Chunichi Dragons	£430,188	\$559,244



NPB ANALYSIS

NIPPON PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 3.1 TO 1

SEVEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 10 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE NPB IS RELATIVELY COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Hawks salary at the top of the NPB pay list (£1.3m) and the average Dragons salary at the bottom (£430,000) is more significant when you note only two teams (the Hawks and Giants) pay more than £1m per man, and the rest drop off from there. In relatively recent times, the Giants and the Hanshin Tigers have been trading places as top spenders although the Hawks were No1 in 2016.

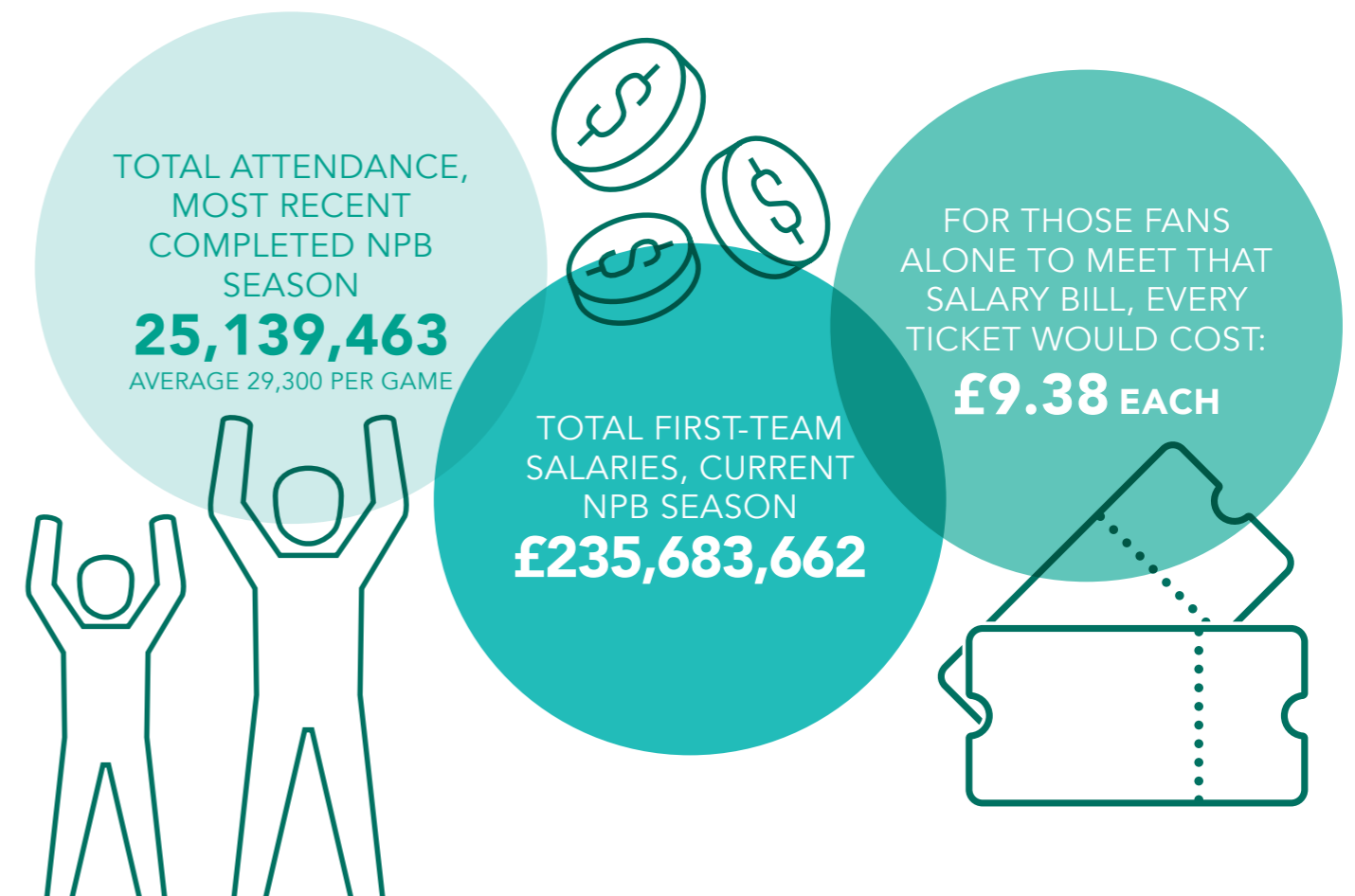
Given that it's a small league and the structure lends itself to randomness in results, you might expect decent variation of the spoils. Six different teams have won the Japan Series in the past decade, although the Hawks have won four of those and three of the last four. Eleven of the current 12 teams have either won the Japan Series or been runners-up in the same period, with only the Orix Buffaloes not doing either.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talked then the Hawks would have won, and did, comfortably, after having the best season all round. The Yomiuri Giants' money should have seen them contending but they didn't even make a play-off period that half the teams contest. The Tigers should have finished in their league final (or third, in effect) but actually finished joint fifth, in effect. The BayStars punched most above their weight - 11th in pay and second in the end.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
Serie A	38	£34,884	\$45,349
NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



MLS ANALYSIS

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER



TOTAL SALARIES:
£154,058,729
\$200,276,348

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No13 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£251,730
\$327,249

MEDIAN SALARY:
£104,040
\$135,252

THE STATE OF PLAY

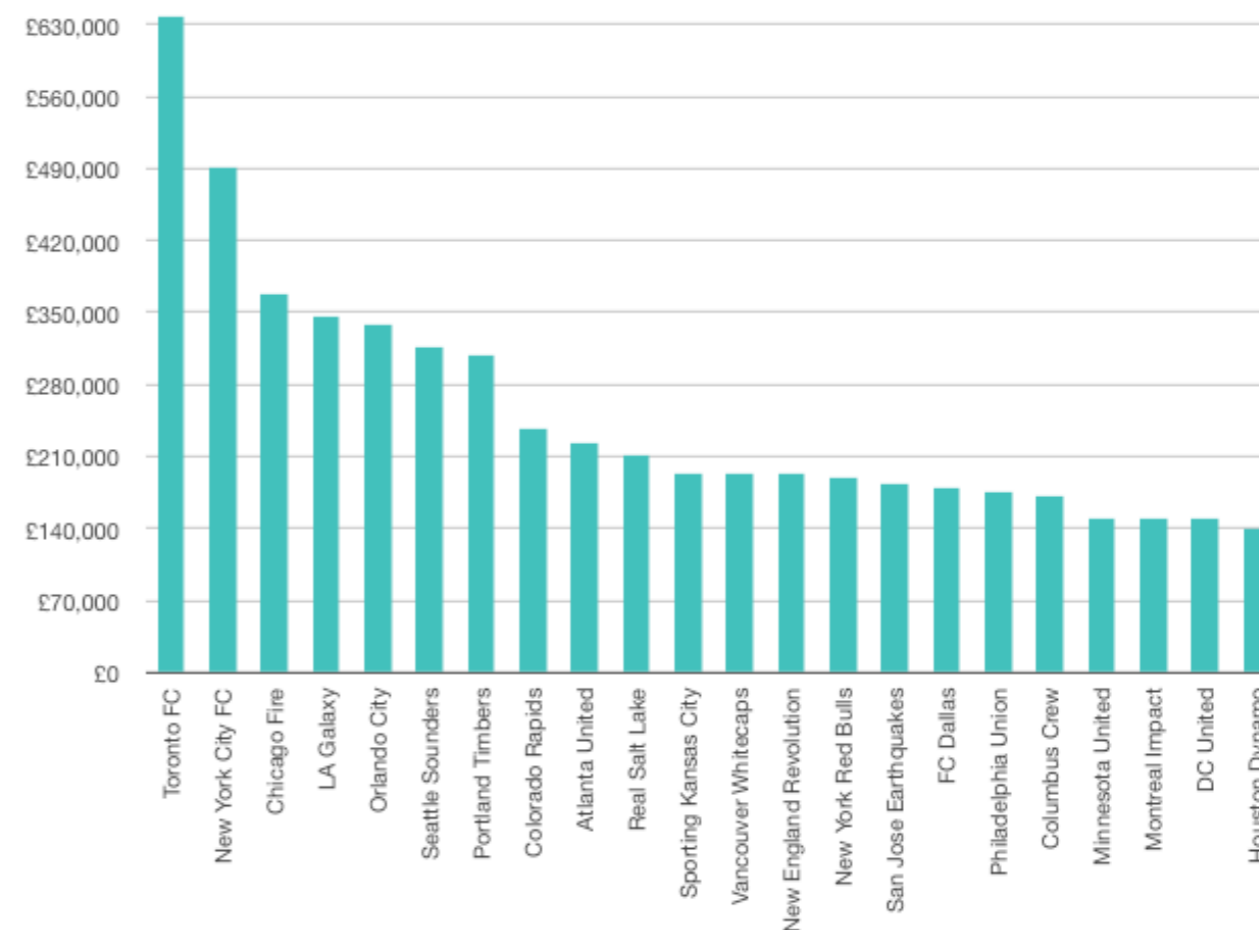
The league expanded in 2017 to embrace two new clubs, Atlanta United FC and Minnesota United. Atlanta made an immediate impact in attendance terms alone, topping the crowd tables with an average of 48,200 fans per game, and also made the play-offs in their inaugural campaign. Minnesota were among the top 10 best-attended clubs with more than 20,000 fans per game on average and while not stellar on the pitch, still outperformed three former MLS Cup champions in LA Galaxy, DC United and Colorado Rapids.

The season is getting towards the business end at the time of writing, with the 12-team play-offs producing a final four of Toronto FC against Columbus Crew in one conference final and Seattle Sounders against Houston Dynamo in the other. Toronto have been the biggest wage spenders by a margin in 2017, averaging more than \$800,000 per man. Three of their players are among the top 10 best paid individuals in MLS: Sebastian Giovinco on more than \$7m, Michael Bradley on \$6.5m and Jozy Altidore on \$4.9m. Giovinco and Altidore both made it into the top 10 scorers list for the season. Columbus reached the last four by stunning Patrick Vieira's New York City FC in the conference semis, prompting the retirement from all forms of football of the legendary Andrea Pirlo. The Manchester City-owned NYC franchise, the biggest payers after Toronto, had become a 'glamour' team via Pirlo and David Villa, whose 22 goals helped them to second in the overall table. Pirlo and Villa both earned approaching \$6m each for the season.

Seattle and Houston had the play-off structure to thank for their shots at glory, having finished respectively seventh and 11th in the overall table. Neither of them could dislodge the Portland Timbers at the top of the Western Conference (although the Sounders came close) but Houston upset the Timbers in the conference semis to reach the last four.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, MLS, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Toronto FC	£638,171	\$829,623
2	New York City FC	£492,592	\$640,370
3	Chicago Fire	£369,011	\$479,714
4	LA Galaxy	£347,091	\$451,218
5	Orlando City	£338,954	\$440,640
6	Seattle Sounders	£317,112	\$412,246
7	Portland Timbers	£308,380	\$400,894
8	Colorado Rapids	£237,888	\$309,255
9	Atlanta United	£223,518	\$290,573
10	Real Salt Lake	£211,378	\$274,791
11	Sporting Kansas City	£194,922	\$253,398
12	Vancouver Whitecaps	£194,216	\$252,480
13	New England Revolution	£193,984	\$252,179
14	New York Red Bulls	£189,428	\$246,257
15	San Jose Earthquakes	£184,596	\$239,975
16	FC Dallas	£181,055	\$235,371
17	Philadelphia Union	£176,601	\$229,581
18	Columbus Crew	£173,014	\$224,918
19	Minnesota United	£151,649	\$197,143
20	Montreal Impact	£150,843	\$196,097
21	DC United	£150,212	\$195,276
22	Houston Dynamo	£139,869	\$181,829



MLS ANALYSIS

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 4.6 TO 1

NINE OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; EIGHT OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, MLS HAS MIDDLING COMPETITIVENESS

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Toronto salary at the top of the MLS pay list (£638,171) and the average Houston salary at the bottom (£139,869) didn't preclude both of them making the last four. But the total payrolls for their respective squads of £17.2m and £3.9m highlight the gulf when some teams splurge on designated players and others don't.

Play-offs are part and parcel of American sporting culture, and the randomness introduced by this lottery keeps more teams involved for a lot longer. Eight different MLS Cup winners in 10 years indicates something works.

By regular season performance alone, or the overall table in other words, there is a strong link between pay and performance. Of course some teams bucked the trend: La Galaxy and Orlando City did much worse than their financial outlay would expect and Columbus better, to name three.

But the top three payers using our metric of average first-team salary in 2017 were Toronto, NYC and Chicago Fire, and they also finished 1-2-3 in the overall table. Seattle and Portland were sixth and seventh best payers and finished seventh and sixth. Sporting Kansas City were 11th on expenditure and in the table, New England were 13th/15th, San Jose were 15th/12th, FC Dallas were 16th/13th, Philadelphia were 17th/16th, Minnesota were 19th/19th, Montreal were 20th/17th and DC United were 21st/21st. The pattern is clear.

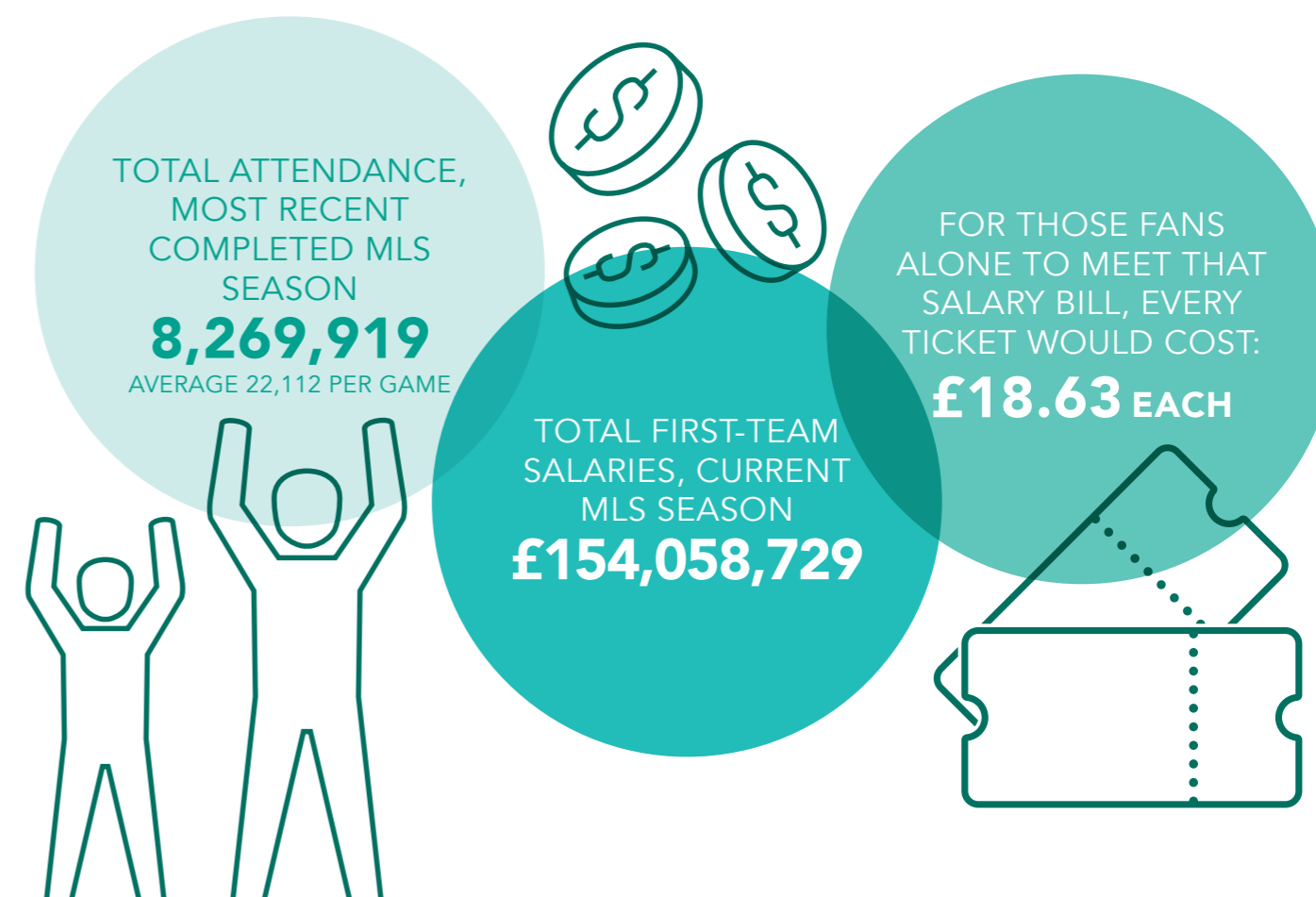
What any of that means as MLS and its critics continue to debate the evolution of the format, and whether the USA needs promotion and relegation adding to its top division, remains to be seen. After the USA failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, the soccer community began a post-mortem bordering on existential crisis. But that is another issue for another day.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talks, then Toronto would be champions as NYC FC, Chicago Fire and LA Galaxy make the final four. Three of them made the play-offs. At the other end, Houston, DC United, Montreal and Minnesota would struggle relatively. In fact Houston went far and the others finished close to the bottom of the table and missed the play-offs.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
Bundesliga	34	£36,922	\$47,999
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NHL	82	£29,183	\$37,938
IPL	14	£28,832	\$37,481
CSL	30	£26,066	\$33,886
Ligue 1	38	£24,853	\$32,309
MLB	162	£21,216	\$27,581
AFL	22	£8,031	\$10,441
MLS	34	£7,404	\$9,625
J-League	34	£4,951	\$6,436
NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



AFL ANALYSIS

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, AUSSIE RULES



TOTAL SALARIES:
£126,863,623
\$164,922,710

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No14 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£176,690
\$229,697

MEDIAN SALARY:
£160,087
\$208,113

THE STATE OF PLAY

The AFL's annual report comes highly recommended for the granular detail on many aspects of the way the competition is run - including salary expenditure - and the latest editions are available here: <http://www.afl.com.au/afl-hq/annual-reports>. One reason we include the 2016 AFL season in this report (and not the recently finished 2017) is the annual report provides an excellent corroboratory source for the survey material we gather; the other reason is related and more prosaic - some league information takes longer to piece together than others.

The AFL remains outstanding in one respect in this report - its 'fairness' as measured by the difference between the club with the highest average first-team pay and the lowest. A salary floor and ceiling for player payments helps with this. Debate continues into other amendments that need to be made, including the extent to which total football department spending should be regulated, as opposed to solely player payments.

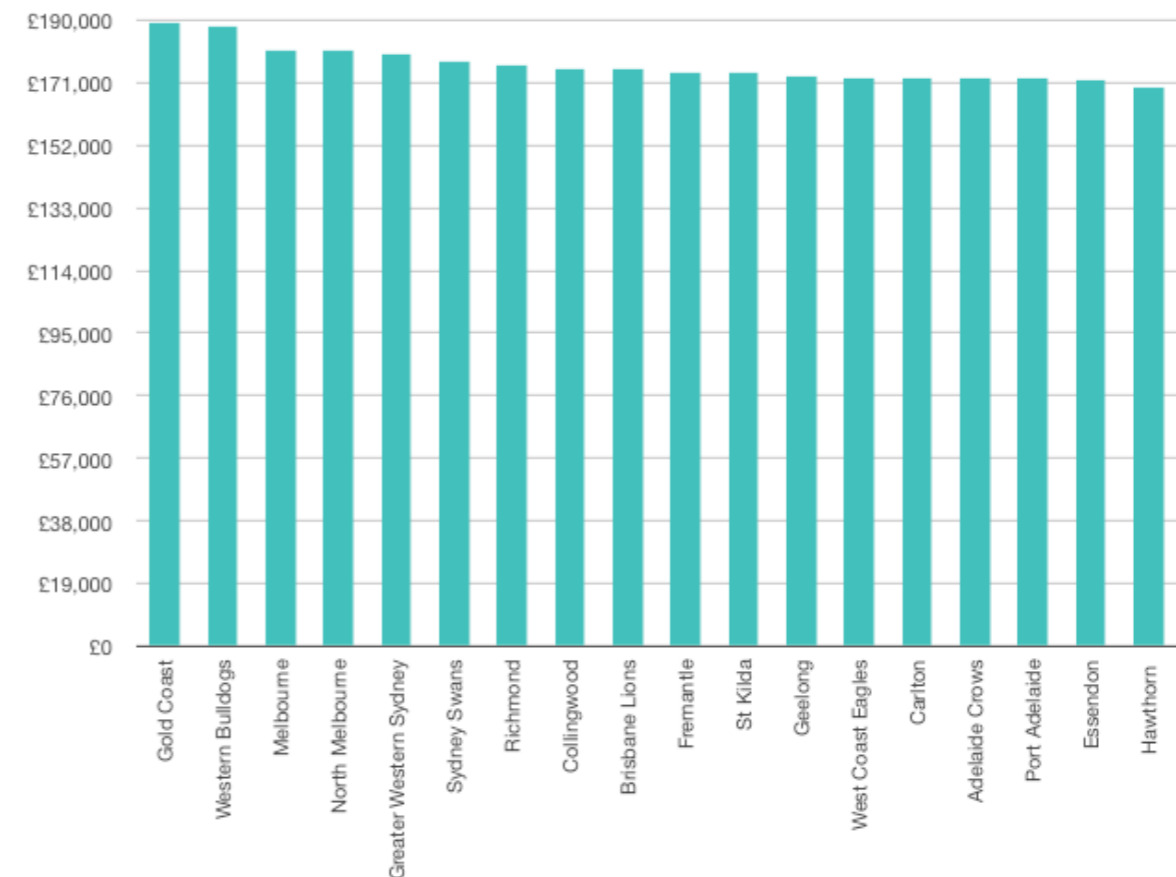
Clubs with the biggest overall spending (the extra, in effect, being on more or better coaches, facilities and other auxiliary spending) tend to win more. That's too complex an issue for these few paragraphs and further reading on the AFL's Competitive Balance Policy is recommended.

But the cap model overall has been a demonstrable success since its introduction in 1987. The traditionally three richest and most successful clubs from Carlton, Collingwood and Essendon had appeared in 75 Grand Finals of 90 up to then (83 per cent) and won 41 of them (46 per cent of all titles). In the 32 Grand Finals since 1987, the 'big three' have appeared in 11 (or 34 per cent) and won six (19 per cent).

This isn't to say the AFL is perfect; far from it. But a league that so consistently pushes itself to consider competitive balance issues is a 'fairer' league than most.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, AFL, 2016 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Gold Coast	£189,586	\$246,461
2	Western Bulldogs	£188,100	\$244,530
3	Melbourne	£180,971	\$235,263
4	North Melbourne	£180,971	\$235,263
5	Greater Western Sydney	£179,964	\$233,954
6	Sydney Swans	£177,579	\$230,852
7	Richmond	£176,546	\$229,510
8	Collingwood	£175,686	\$228,391
9	Brisbane Lions	£175,679	\$228,382
10	Fremantle	£174,271	\$226,553
11	St Kilda	£174,271	\$226,553
12	Geelong	£173,279	\$225,263
13	West Coast Eagles	£172,843	\$224,696
14	Carlton	£172,821	\$224,668
15	Adelaide Crows	£172,814	\$224,659
16	Port Adelaide	£172,814	\$224,659
17	Essendon	£172,154	\$223,800
18	Hawthorn	£169,957	\$220,944



AFL ANALYSIS

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, AUSSIE RULES



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.1 TO 1

NONE OF THE 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 17 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE AFL SHOULD BE THE MOST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

Six different Grand Final winners in 10 years include four wins for Hawthorn and two for Geelong. A further four different teams have been runners-up, making 10 different teams filling 20 places. That's not as good as the more obviously 'unfair' MLB (in pay terms), with 16 in 20; but the AFL has had six different teams filling six berths over the past three years, seven over four and eight over five.

Our research suggests the various competitive balance mechanisms at least serve to spread the 'star' players around the league. To grossly simplify, the best of those command the biggest money, and the salary cap limits the amount of 'top stars' playing at any one club.

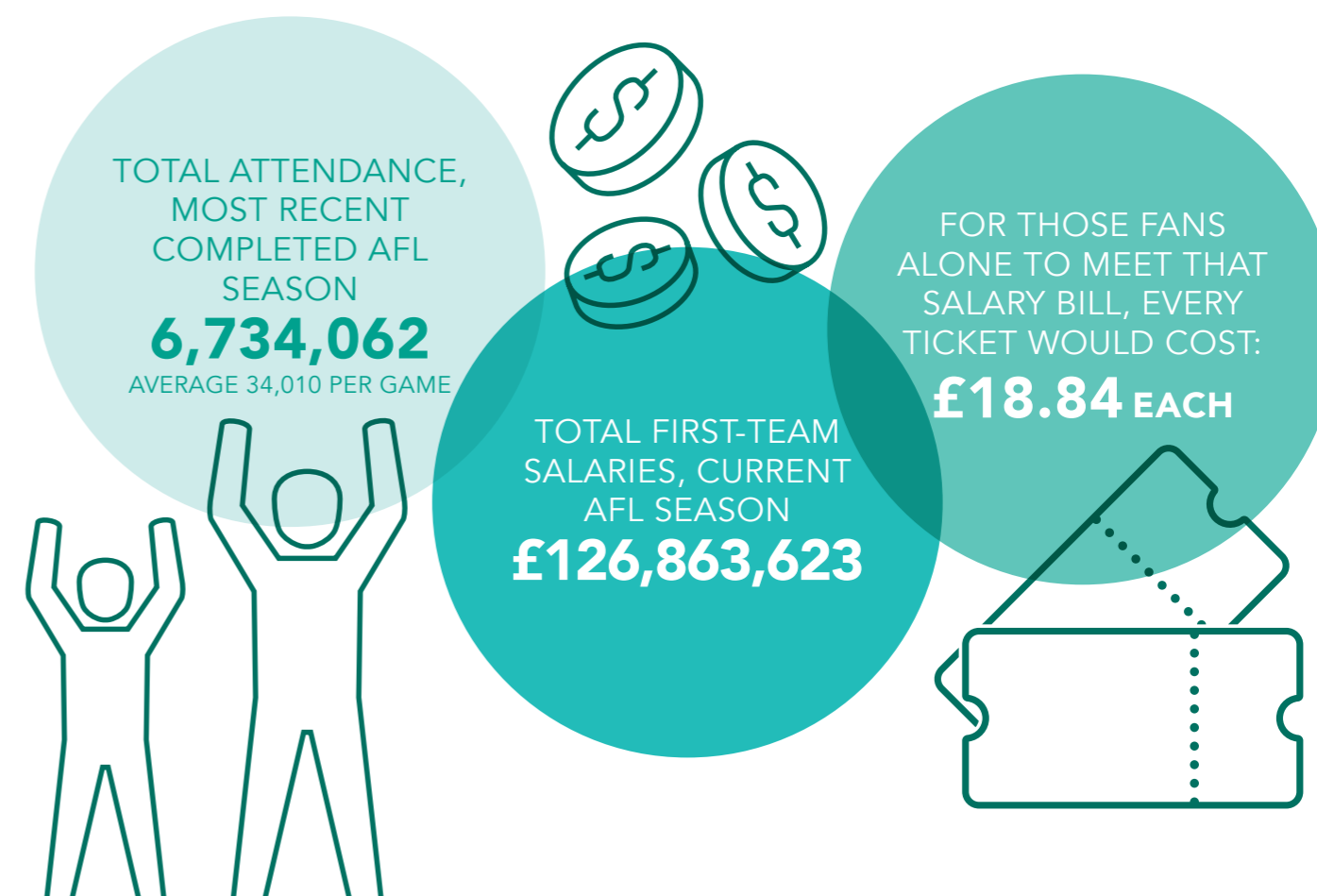
Only two players earned \$1.2m or more (Australian dollars) in 2016, two more earned \$1.1m to \$1.2m, two earned \$1m to \$1.2, three earned \$900,000 to \$1m and five earned \$800,000 to \$900,000. Only Geelong had two players among that group of 14, while six teams had none. Every team had at least one player earning \$700,000-plus.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money alone talked, then Gold Coast and Western Bulldogs would have contested the Grand Final; the latter did, winning against Sydney, but Gold Coast didn't even make the finals series. And the other finals series competitors would have been Melbourne (yes, they were), North Melbourne (no), Greater Western Sydney and Sydney (both yes), Richmond and Collingwood (no). But this is financially competitive league, and money thus talks less.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
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NPB	143	£4,578	\$5,952
Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



J-LEAGUE ANALYSIS

JAPANESE TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£88,883,099
\$115,548,029

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No15 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£168,339
\$218,841

MEDIAN SALARY:
£105,634
\$137,324

THE STATE OF PLAY

As the J-League came to a conclusion as November unfolded, Kashima Antlers looked home and hosed. Go OIWA's team sat at the top of the table with two games left, seven points clear of Kawasaki Frontale who had three games to go. Kashima had already qualified for the Champions League.

This season's J-League marked a return to a simpler league structure after a two-year experiment with a two-phase tournament that culminated in a play-off round. Urawa Red Diamonds might well have felt aggrieved at the way things transpired in this experiment in 2016. They carried all before them in the second phase to top the aggregate table 15 points clear of a team - the Antlers - who subsequently conquered them in a two-legged final.

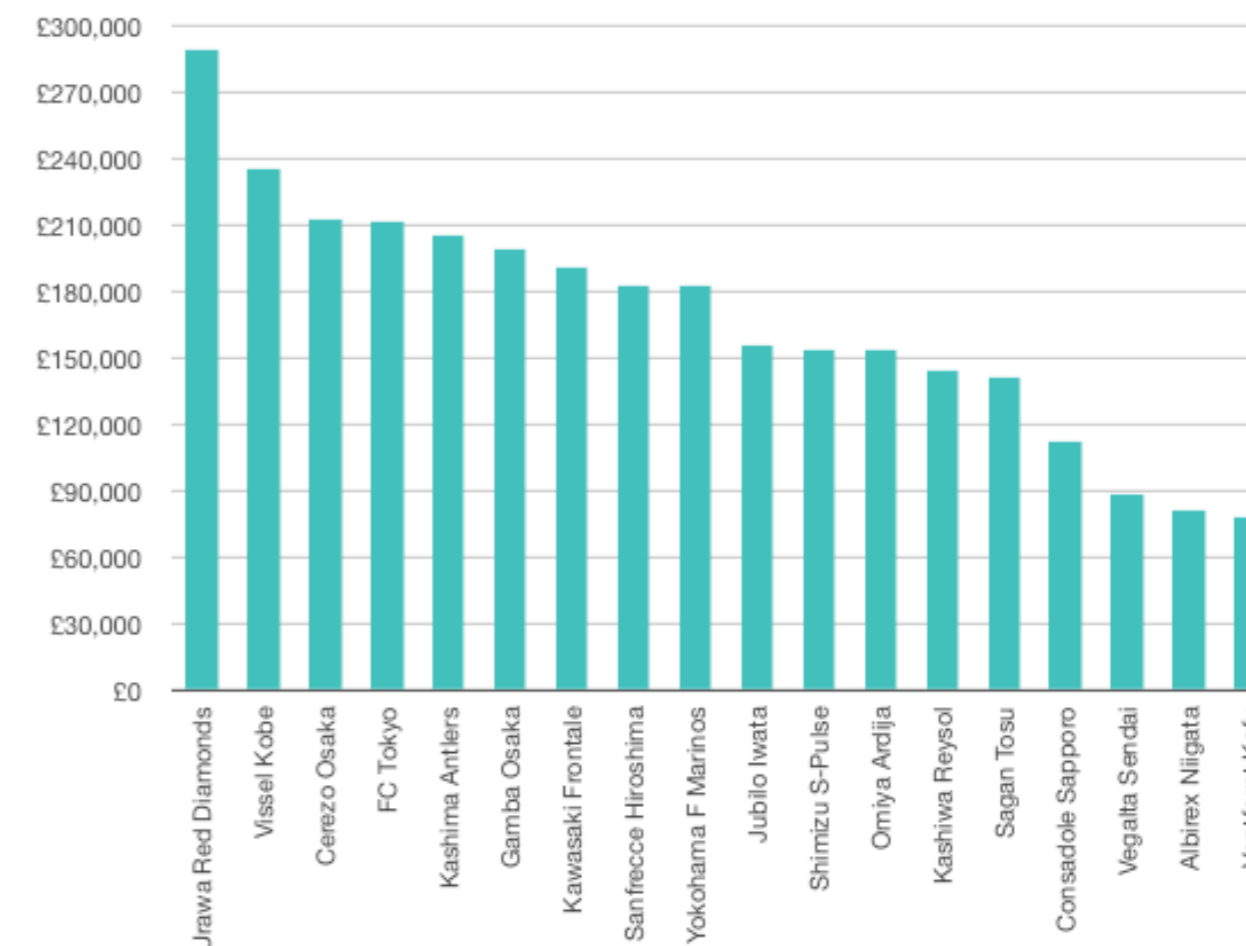
Whether jaded by that experience or just off their game, Urawa had a disappointing 2017. Even an end-of-season surge would not be enough to see the league's best supported side snatch the consolation of qualification for the Champions League.

At the bottom, six teams entered the final three games in a scramble to avoid relegation. Albirex Niigata had the faintest of hopes as they sat nine points from safety with only nine to play for. Omiya Ardija, Sanfrecce Hiroshima, Ventforet Kofu, Shimizu S-Pulse and Consadole Sapporo were in that mix.

Sapporo counted former Coventry and Perugia striker Jay Bothroyd among their foreign contingent - Bothroyd being a relatively rare Englishman abroad. J-League clubs have to abide by foreign player limits of five per club and four for any match day squad. The overwhelming foreign nationality of choice is Brazilian players. Only two of the 18 clubs did not have at least one Brazilian in 2017 (Yokohama and Sagan Tosu) while a majority of clubs had at least three, and two had four.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, J.LEAGUE, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Urawa Red Diamonds	£289,185	\$375,941
2	Vissel Kobe	£236,037	\$306,848
3	Cerezo Osaka	£212,654	\$276,450
4	FC Tokyo	£211,752	\$275,277
5	Kashima Antlers	£206,362	\$268,271
6	Gamba Osaka	£199,736	\$259,657
7	Kawasaki Frontale	£191,776	\$249,309
8	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	£183,350	\$238,355
9	Yokohama F Marinos	£183,099	\$238,028
10	Jubilo Iwata	£155,869	\$202,629
11	Shimizu S-Pulse	£153,974	\$200,166
12	Omiya Ardija	£153,680	\$199,784
13	Kashiwa Reysol	£144,789	\$188,225
14	Sagan Tosu	£141,947	\$184,532
15	Consadole Sapporo	£113,005	\$146,906
16	Vegalta Sendai	£89,461	\$116,299
17	Albirex Niigata	£81,866	\$106,426
18	Ventforet Kofu	£78,498	\$102,047



J-LEAGUE ANALYSIS

JAPANESE TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 3.7 TO 1

EIGHT OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; NINE OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE J-LEAGUE IS OF MIDDLING COMPETITIVENESS

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average Urawa Red Diamonds salary at the top of the J-League pay list (£289,185) and the average Ventforet Kofu salary at the bottom (£78,498) is not quite fourfold. The total basic payrolls for their respective squads was £8.1m and £2.4m. The gap between top and bottom, when the same teams held those positions last year, has closed a little. Urawa are paying virtually the same and Ventforet just a bit more.

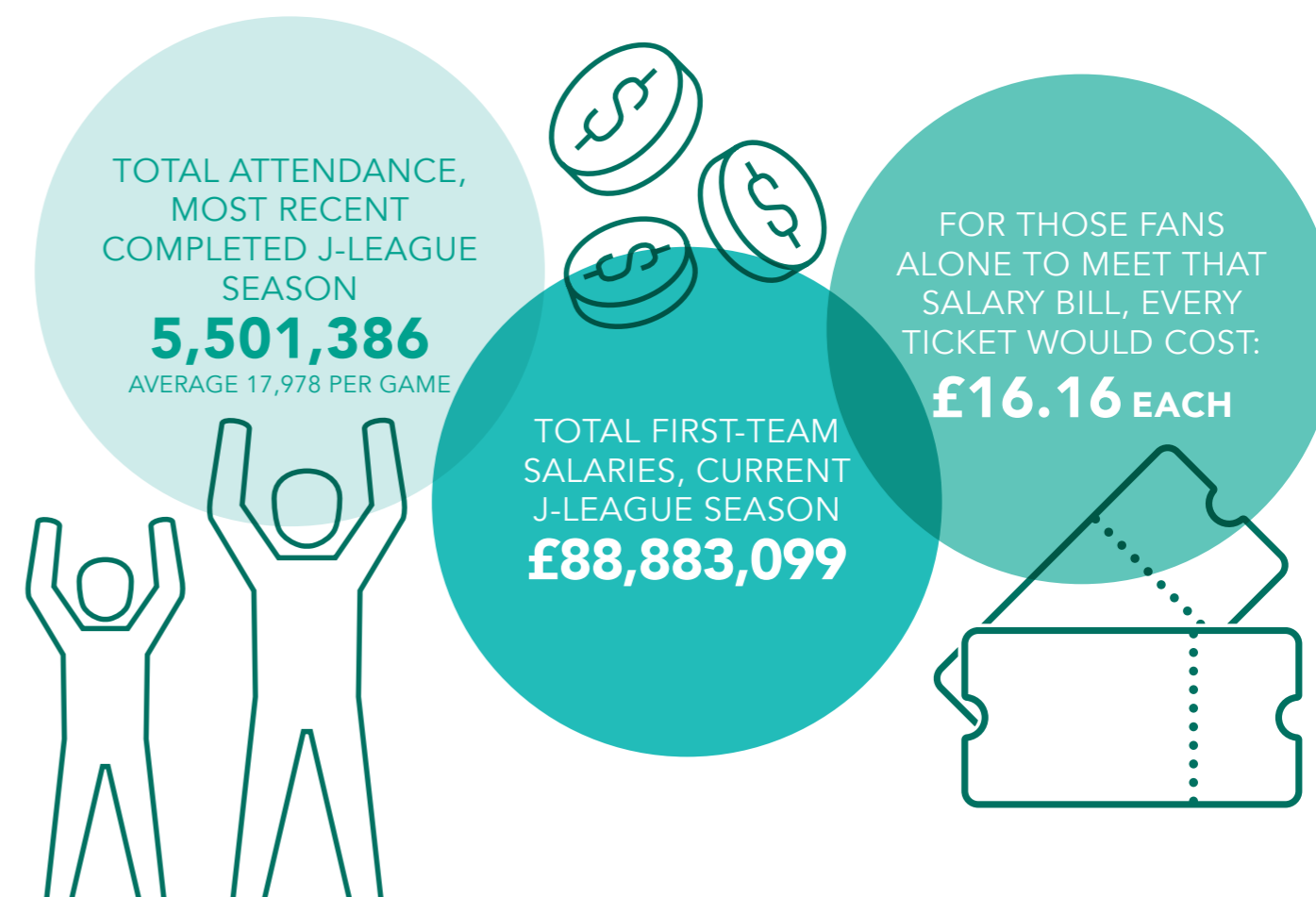
The spread of honours in the past decade - up to and including 2016 - was reasonable but not great. Five different J-League winners in 10 years include four wins for the Kashima Antlers and three for Sanfrecce Hiroshima, and one each for Gamba Osaka, Kashiwa Reysol and Nagoya Grampus. A further four different teams have been runners-up, meaning nine teams have filled the 20 top-two places.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money talked, then Urawa Red Diamonds would have won the title from Vissel Kobe, Cerezo Osaka and FC Tokyo. Only Cerezo were in the shake-up for Champions League places as the season moved to a conclusion. There seems to be a stronger link between lack of resources and a lower finish with the four bottom payers struggling to get as high as halfway, or worse.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
Premier League	38	£69,540	\$90,402
NBA	82	£67,047	\$87,161
La Liga	38	£44,212	\$57,476
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Scottish Premiership	38	£3,911	\$5,084
CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



SCOT PREM ANALYSIS

SCOTTISH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



TOTAL SALARIES:
£44,137,348
\$57,378,552

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No16 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£148,611
\$193,194

MEDIAN SALARY:
£62,400
\$81,120

THE STATE OF PLAY

Celtic underlined their status as the overwhelmingly dominant force in contemporary Scottish football by setting a new all-time unbeaten domestic record on 4 November. By thrashing St Johnstone 4-0 they went 63 straight domestic games without losing (all competitions) to top their own mark of 62 games - set 100 years previously.

Surpassing a record that has stood for a century is a noteworthy achievement. Clubs in supposedly 'one-team leagues' lose games now and again. They sometimes lose the league - just ask PSG in France. So Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers deserved significant credit.

It should also be uncontroversial, however, to accept that the small community who comprise the Scottish Premiership - a 12-team division - range from bona fide giants (by history, crowds, honours, you name it) to clubs half the size of some of those in England's fifth division.

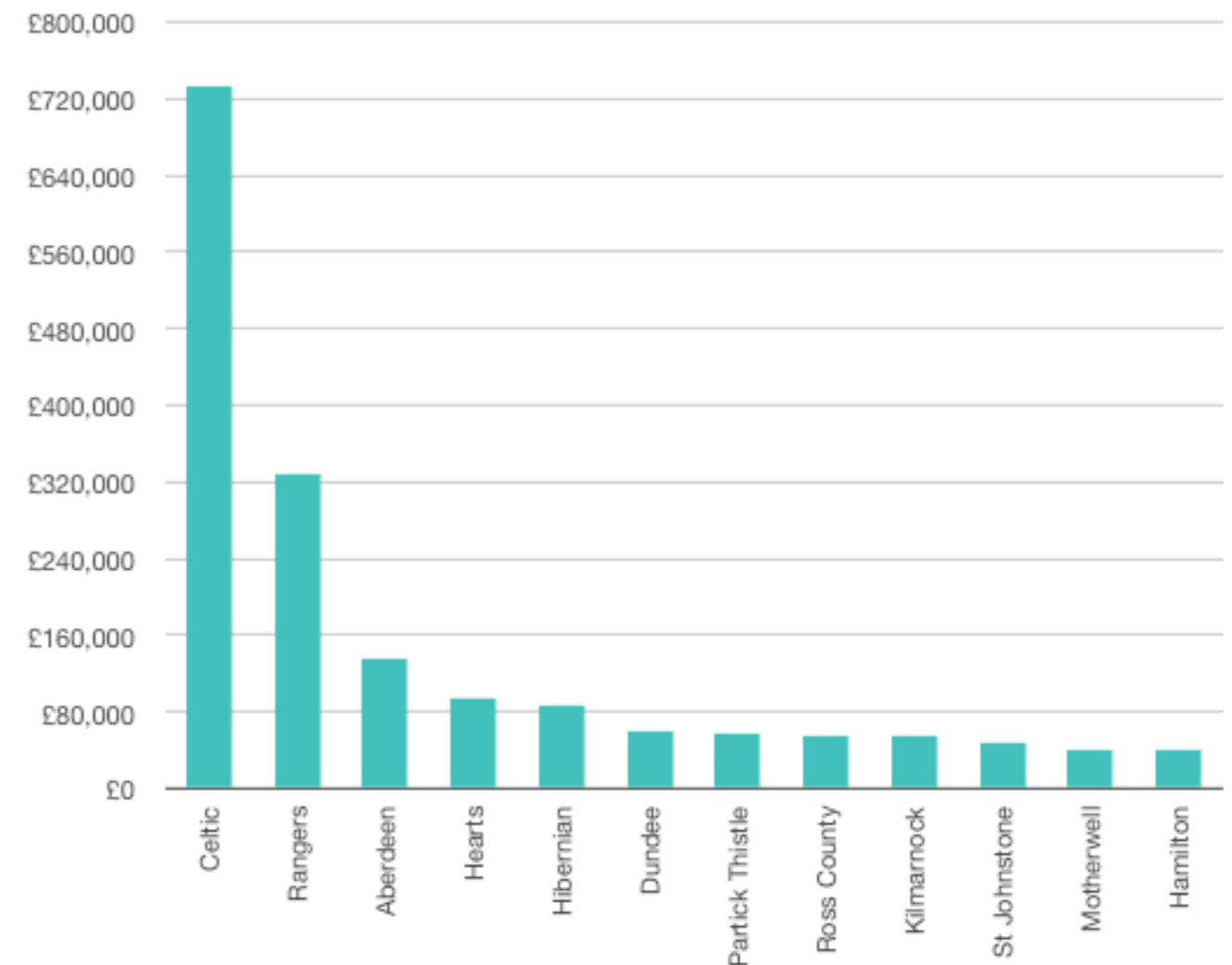
The resources are spread across just as wide a range, from Celtic capable of having a total club wage bill of £40m-plus to others closer to a million. As Motherwell manager Steve Robinson said in an interview with The Times recently: 'I've got first-team squad guys earning £250 [basic] a week. I've got three or four boys on that kind of money.'

Of course that's just a few players, and just basic pay (our metric) that will inevitably rise with appearances and results that in turn generate income that becomes performance-related pay. But £250 a week is still just £13,000 a year in a league where the biggest names at Celtic could gross seven figures, all told.

One housekeeping note on this year's Scottish figures: first-team squad sizes were so diverse last year (from 21 to 34) that, given the sums in play, there was a risk of misinterpretation. So a maximum of 26 players have been counted this time per club, selected on the basis of frequency of use, and hence 'first-team' status in the most meaningful sense.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP, 2017-18 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Celtic	£735,040	\$955,552
2	Rangers	£329,600	\$428,480
3	Aberdeen	£136,382	\$177,296
4	Hearts	£95,514	\$124,168
5	Hibernian	£87,100	\$113,230
6	Dundee	£59,904	\$77,875
7	Partick Thistle	£58,175	\$75,628
8	Ross County	£56,394	\$73,312
9	Kilmarnock	£55,100	\$71,630
10	St Johnstone	£47,992	\$62,389
11	Motherwell	£42,662	\$55,461
12	Hamilton	£41,488	\$53,934



SCOT PREM ANALYSIS

SCOTTISH TOP-DIVISION FOOTBALL



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 17.7 TO 1

FIFTEEN OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; TWO OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP IS UNCOMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The difference between the average basic Celtic salary at the top of the Scottish Premiership pay list (£735,000) and the average Hamilton salary at the bottom (£41,000) is even larger than last season, when it was 'only' 16.9 times bigger. To put this into context, there is less of a resource gulf between Celtic and their 2017-18 Champions League group stage opponents Paris Saint-Germain than between Celtic and most clubs in their domestic division. Using our GSSS numbers from this report, PSG's players earn 'only' 8.8 times as much as Celtic's.

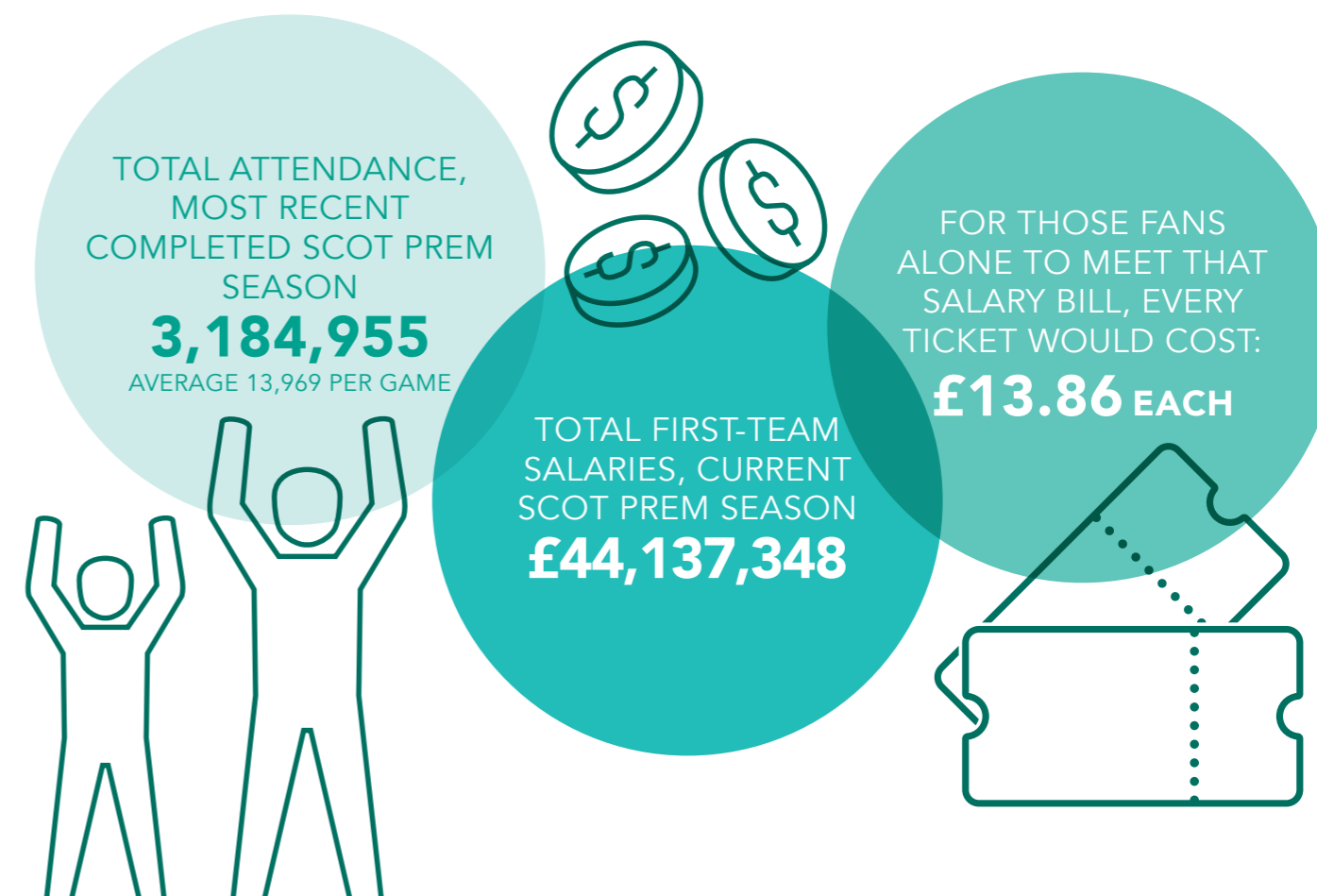
Celtic are paying substantially more than double the amount even of their closest rivals Rangers, and almost as much by themselves as their 11 division rivals combined. So it isn't a shock that Celtic began the season with expectations they would win a seventh league title in a row. It is 32 years since any team other than Celtic or Rangers won the title: Aberdeen in 1985. It is difficult to see how this will change any time soon, not least with Celtic increasingly locked in to the virtuous cycle that is regular Champions League football - and the extra money it brings, and the extra advantage that provides.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money alone talked, then the title will be Celtic's with Rangers as runners-up ahead of Aberdeen, Hearts and Hibernian. St Johnstone, Motherwell and Hamilton would be scrapping it out to avoid the drop. But as has already been amply demonstrated in Scotland in 2017-18 so far, financial advantage can be wasted - not least via woeful bosses - while good managers can turn lesser resources into a greater sum than their parts.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
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CFL	18	£3,717	\$4,832
WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



CFL ANALYSIS

CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, GRIDIRON



TOTAL SALARIES:
£26,496,264
\$34,445,143

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No17 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£66,910
\$86,983

MEDIAN SALARY:
£44,669
\$58,682

THE STATE OF PLAY

The Canadian Football League in 2016 was a breakthrough season for the Ottawa Redblacks who won a first championship for the capital for 40 years. The winners held off a furious comeback from the Calgary Stampeders to clinch what many branded the biggest upset in the Grey Cup. The Ottawa quarterback Henry Burris - formerly a 10-year Stampeders veteran with two Grey Cups for them - was named the league's MVP. Brad Sinopoli, the capital side's wide receiver and another Stampeders alumnus, was handed the award for the Most Valuable Canadian.

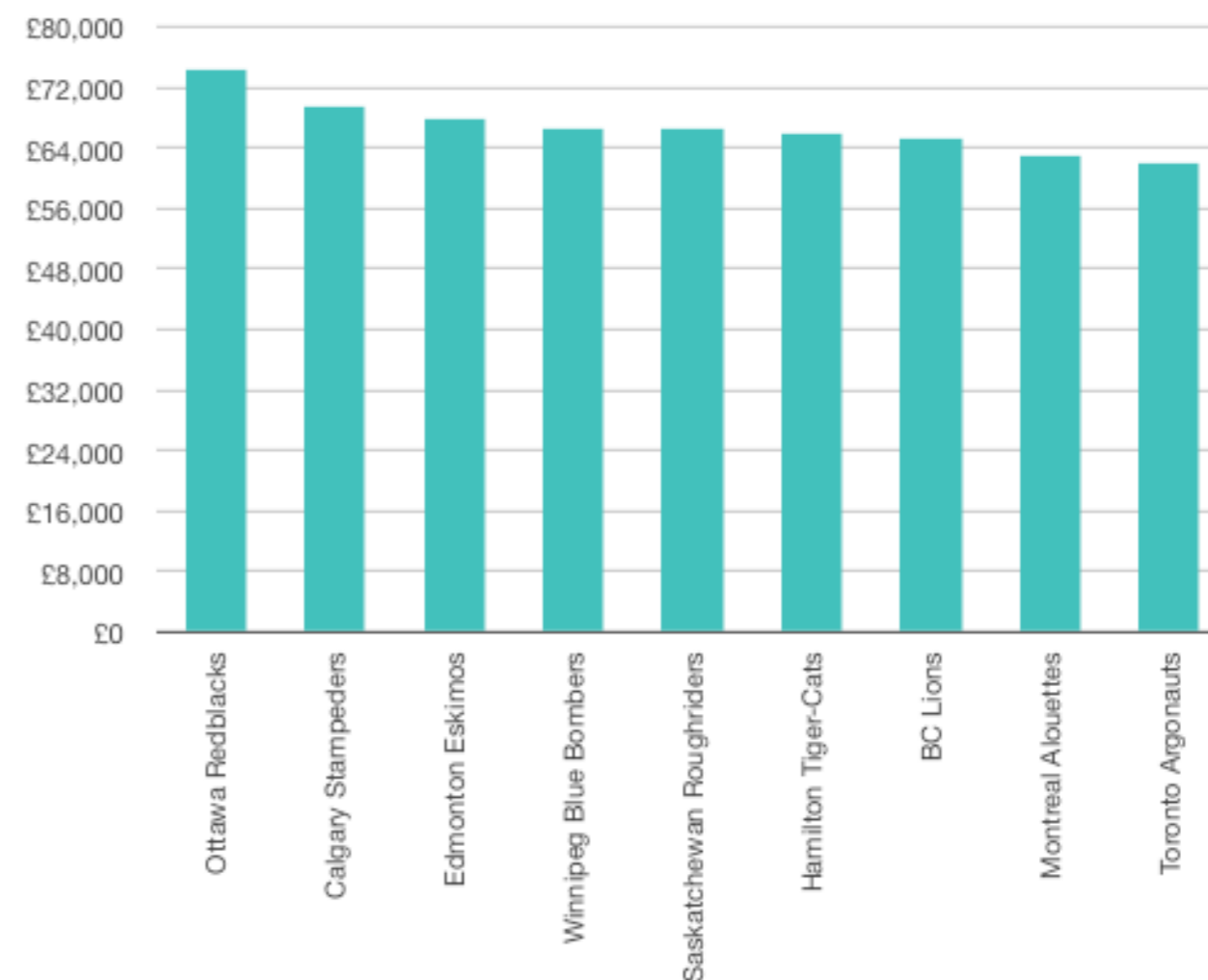
In off-field developments, drug testing resumed after a season of none, with a possible two-game ban for using performance-enhancing substances. In economic shenanigans, Saskatchewan were adjudged to have breached CFL rules on practicing with ineligible, injured and free agent players. They were fined \$60,000 and had \$26,000 deducted from their salary cap. The CFL launched an investigation after a Stampeders quarterback suggested impropriety by his rivals via social media.

The Redblacks carried their 2016 form into the 2017 season to make this year's play-offs. They met the Roughriders for the right to play the Toronto Argonauts for a place in the division final. And lost. Elsewhere, the Edmonton Eskimos beat the Winnipeg Blue Bombers to progress to a meeting with the Stampeders in the quest for the other Grey Cup final berth. Saskatchewan started 2017 with hope they could run all the way to the Grey Cup final in Ottawa after moving to a new home stadium. The franchise upped sticks at the beginning of the new term after 95 years at the Mosaic Stadium at Taylor Field. The newly built Mosaic Stadium boasts a capacity of 33,000 and is expandable to 40,000 when the championship game pays a visit.

It was a season to forget for the Montreal Alouettes, who had a 3-15 win-loss record that broke the team record for defeats in a season.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, CFL, 2016 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Ottawa Redblacks	£74,504	\$96,855
2	Calgary Stampeders	£69,685	\$90,591
3	Edmonton Eskimos	£68,117	\$88,551
4	Winnipeg Blue Bombers	£66,630	\$86,619
5	Saskatchewan Roughriders	£66,614	\$86,599
6	Hamilton Tiger-Cats	£66,082	\$85,906
7	BC Lions	£65,374	\$84,986
8	Montreal Alouettes	£63,140	\$82,082
9	Toronto Argonauts	£62,043	\$80,656



CFL ANALYSIS

CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, GRIDIRON



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.2 TO 1

ONE OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 16 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE CFL SHOULD BE VYING FOR MOST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

The CFL has always been the toughest league from which to garner reliable numbers and that is down to the almost religious secrecy of everyone involved, not least the teams and team owners. No source that could be described as even vaguely public exists that tells us about player pay, and we can speculate why; certainly some players are unhappy with their lot. But pointers from agents and insiders do allow insight.

What's remarkable, in a sport where team incomes vary hugely (50 per cent or more) and one team's football operations budget can be 25 per cent bigger than the next, is the slender difference in pay, at 1.2 to 1 from top to bottom; the small difference between the cap floor and ceiling explains it. Other metrics highlight economic competitive balance, including the top 10 per cent of earners making 'only' 22.6 per cent of all salaries; and the median salary being a high percentage of the average.

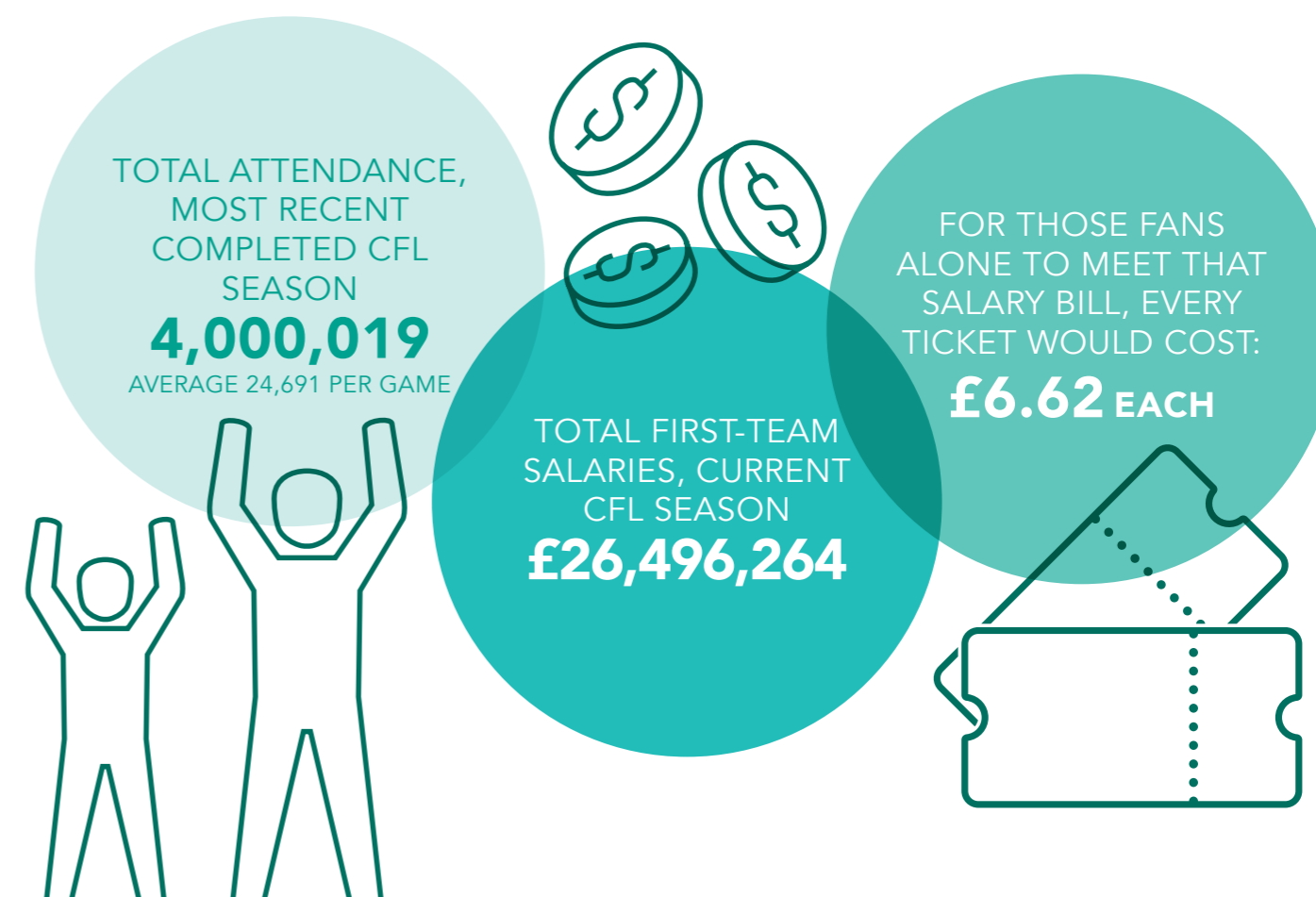
Seven different winners of the Grey Cup in 10 years points to a decent spread of honours; seven different winners in the last seven years to 2016 is remarkable. So too is the fact that all nine current teams have either won or been runners-up at least once each in the past seven years.

THE MONEY TALK

It's a small league and comes with the randomness of play-offs and a tiny pay differential but average first-team pay leaders and runners-up in 2016 were Grey Cup winners and runners-up the Redblacks and Stampeders. Third biggest spenders Edmonton were also in the last four and the two lowest spenders were among three teams who failed to make the play-offs.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

LEAGUE	GAMES PER REGULAR SEASON	AVG £ PER PLAYER PER GAME	AVG \$ PER PLAYER PER GAME
NFL	16	£129,845	\$168,798
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WNBA	34	£1,691	\$2,199



WNBA ANALYSIS

WOMEN'S NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



TOTAL SALARIES:
£8,280,998
\$10,765,297

AVERAGE SALARY RANKING:
No18 LEAGUE

AVERAGE SALARY PER PLAYER:
£57,507
\$74,759

MEDIAN SALARY:
£53,965
\$70,155

THE STATE OF PLAY

The WNBA in 2017 attracted crowds at a six-year high, both on aggregate (almost 1.6m paying fans) and per match (7,716) with double-digit increases in Los Angeles, Connecticut and Minnesota, where the Lynx had their highest average attendance (10,407) since their debut season in 1999.

Yet it was on social media that the league made genuinely ground-breaking progress, becoming the first women's professional sport to have games screened live on Twitter. Twenty games per season from 2016 to 2018 will be shown this way under a deal between Twitter and the WNBA, and an average of 613,000 unique viewers watched each match via this method in 2017. Some games topped a million viewers, led by the Phoenix Mercury vs the Dallas Wings, the San Antonio Stars vs the Wings, and the Mercury vs the Minnesota Lynx.

In a competitive sports market where leagues want to reach and retain new audiences, the WNBA had its stature affirmed by the announcement that the 2018 EA Sports basketball game would include full rosters of WNBA teams for the first time.

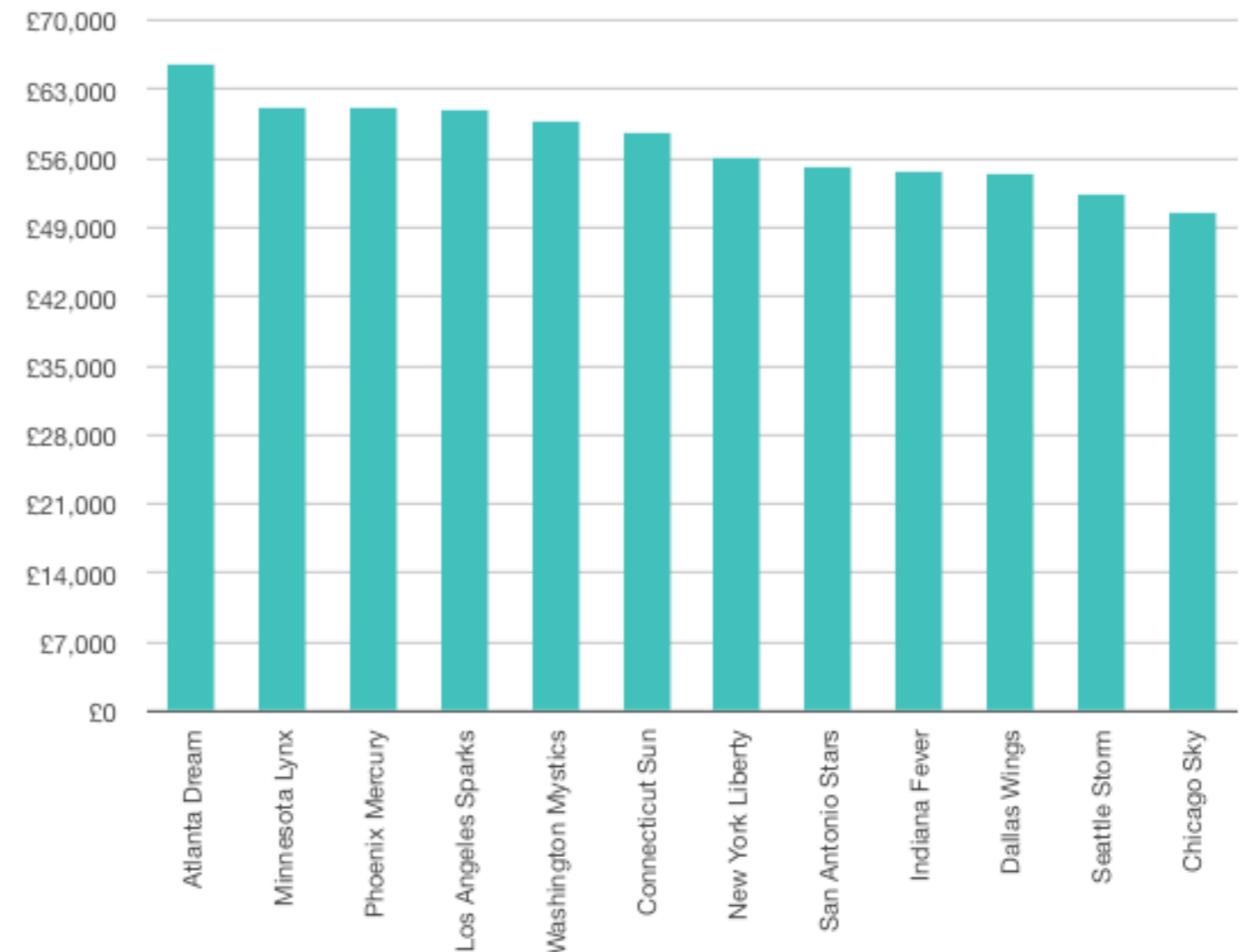
On the court, the Lynx beat the defending champions from Los Angeles Sparks 3-2 in the finals, securing a fourth title in seven years and reversing the outcome of 2016.

The 12-team league is split across Western and Eastern conferences – with the top eight sides across the two progressing to the play-offs. The Lynx were the best team in the regular season with 27 wins and seven losses, closely followed by the Sparks (26-8).

The Lynx dominated the end of season awards with center Sylvia Fowles taking the league MVP and finals MVP awards. Fowles was one of more than 80 players who headed from the WNBA season to an off-season assignment with a foreign team, in her case in Beijing. While the WNBA is the pinnacle of women's basketball in quality terms, considerable financial rewards are available elsewhere, especially at a few teams in Russia and Turkey.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY, WNBA, 2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, £	AVG ANNUAL PER PLAYER, \$
1	Atlanta Dream	£65,663	\$85,362
2	Minnesota Lynx	£61,324	\$79,721
3	Phoenix Mercury	£61,279	\$79,663
4	Los Angeles Sparks	£60,938	\$79,219
5	Washington Mystics	£59,724	\$77,641
6	Connecticut Sun	£58,604	\$76,185
7	New York Liberty	£56,163	\$73,011
8	San Antonio Stars	£55,187	\$71,743
9	Indiana Fever	£54,730	\$71,149
10	Dallas Wings	£54,414	\$70,738
11	Seattle Storm	£52,438	\$68,169
12	Chicago Sky	£50,531	\$65,691



WNBA ANALYSIS

WOMEN'S NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST PAID TEAM AND LOWEST PAID: 1.3 TO 1

TWO OF 18 LEAGUES HAVE A 'FAIRER' SPREAD, WITH A LOWER GAP; 15 OF 18 ARE LESS 'FAIR' AMONG THE LEAGUES IN THIS SURVEY, THE WNBA IS AMONG THE MOST COMPETITIVE

ON BALANCE

Six different teams have won the WNBA finals in the past 10 seasons, with the Lynx winning four and the Mercury two. A further three teams have reached the finals. If the ratio between the best paid team in average pay (our unique metric in the GSSS) is small at 1.3 to one, and only two leagues are 'fairer', then it becomes more so if you take total player payroll figures.

Official figures for the 2017 season obtained by Sporting Intelligence for this report show the differential between the Atlanta Dream at one extreme (total final salaries \$938,983) and the Chicago Sky at the other end (\$788,291) is 1.19 to 1.

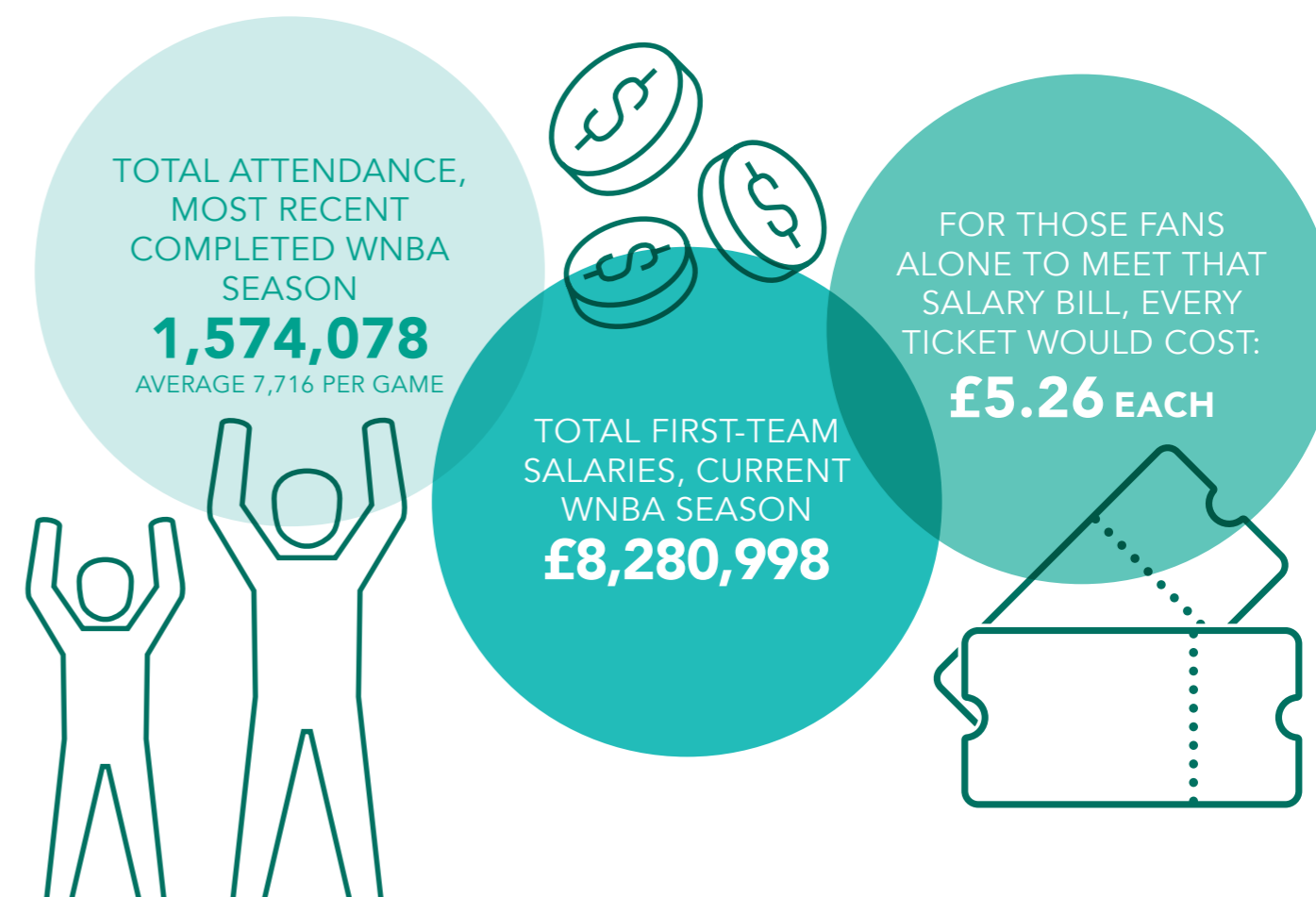
The 12 total payrolls in 2017, for the record, were: Dream \$938,983; Lynx, \$956,653; Mercury, \$955,960; Sparks, \$950,625; Mystics, \$931,697; Sun, \$914,221; Liberty, \$876,136; Stars, \$860,911; Fever, \$924,936; Wings, \$848,852; Storm, \$818,032; Sky \$788,291.

THE MONEY TALK

If the money alone talked, then the Atlanta Dream would have been 2017 champions having beaten the Lynx in the finals. The Sparks and the Mercury would have been in the semi-finals. On the flip side, the Sky, Storm, Wings and Fever would have missed the play-offs. In fact the Lynx did reach the final and won, against the Sparks, and the Sparks and Mercury were both top-four finishers. The Sky and the Fever did miss the play-offs but the Storm and Wings reached them then fell at the first hurdle.

AVERAGE FIRST-TEAM PAY PER GAME

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Sportingintelligence has undertaken journalistic and research projects for bodies ranging from football leagues in the UK and overseas to major media companies including ESPN in the USA, as well as institutions including Lloyds of London.

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