

MONEY MAKING NOISE IN WORLD OF SPORTS

If you have a child and like money, groom him or her to be a sports star. Sports is where you'll find the real loot.

Money has become the talk of the sports world lately, and here are a couple of examples:

— Juan Soto, a baseball player of considerable talent for the Washington Nationals, said thanks but no thanks to a contract offer of \$440 million over 15 years. C'mon, he's got a family to feed. Soto thinks that's was an insulting offer, considering it averages out to less than \$30 million per year and some of his fellow major leaguers, whose stats don't measure up to Soto's, are already making in excess of \$30 million. Another mitigating factor? Soto is only 23 and two-plus years away from free-agent eligibility, so he has a couple of hundred games to put up even more impressive stats before some team (probably the Yankees or Dodgers) pushes his offer to a cool \$500 million for oh, 12 seasons.

— The Saudi Arabian money pit that has thrown a wrench into the world of professional golf is on the verge of winning the battle because players can't say no to offers of life-changing riches. Could you turn down \$90 million, as was reported to have been offered Cameron Smith, winner of the Open Championship at St. Andrew's in Scotland? Is there a chance Phil Mickelson would have said thanks, but no thanks to \$200 million showing up one day in his chequing account? If you were Richard Bland, Kevin Na, Pat Perez or Taylor Gooch, would guaranteed millions of dollars for fewer 'working' days be attractive enough to say 'sayonara' to the PGA Tour, as Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama is expected to do one of these days?

The catch-phrase slogan about money being the root of all evil may have some legitimacy, but money can also be the root of a great deal of happiness. Just ask lottery winners, or Michael Jordan, whose net worth is \$2.2 billion, or soccer star Lionel Messi, who pulled in \$130 million last year, \$75 million for playing soccer, and \$55 million from off-field income. LeBron James made twice as much (\$80 million) off the basketball court than he did on it (\$40 million) while aging tennis star Roger Federer pulled in only \$700,000 last year for his tennis accomplishments, but is keeping creditors at bay thanks to \$90 million in off-course income.

And then there's Tom Brady. He's 44 years old, still playing quarterback in the toughest league in the world and making \$84 million in on- and off-field income. And his net worth of \$250 million ranks second in his *family*. His wife Gisele Bundchen, one of the world's highest paid supermodels, has a net worth of \$400 million. It's safe to say Tom and Gisele can afford extra butter on their popcorn when they take in a movie.

- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "According to Orange News, a farmer who built his own submarine tested it by diving to the bottom of a nearby lake. He christened it the Cincinnati Red."
- **Super 70s Sports**, on Twitter, recalling a line from former Houston Oilers coach **Bum Phillips**, after **Earl Campbell** failed to complete a one-mile run in practice: "When it's first and a mile, I won't give it to him."
- **Mike Bianchi** of the Orlando Sentinel: "I'm still having a hard time grasping why nobody complains when American corporations and, yes, American presidents do business with Saudi Arabia, but American golfers get ripped for it."
- **Greg Cote** of the Miami Herald: "**Steph Curry** will host **The ESPYs** . . . poor guy is *finally* getting some attention!"
- **Steph Curry**, hosting the ESPYs, on **Tom Brady** unretiring from the NFL at age 44: "He's the only guy I know who'd rather get hit by **Aaron Donald** than hang out with a supermodel."
- Hockey Unplugged, on Facebook: "The reason they built the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto is so that Leafs' fans can go see what the Stanley Cup looks like."
- Another one from **Greg Cote**: "**Juan Soto** rejects \$440 million offer from Nationals. Dude. You're hitting .250."
- **RJ Currie** again: "A fang-toothed vampire deer was recently spotted in Afghanistan for the first time in 66 years. Speaking of rare sightings, the Seattle Mariners are in a playoff spot."
- Headline at fark.com, after USA Today ran a story detailing the most overrated player on each NFL team: "Well, except for the Texans because they're all accurately rated as terrible."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times; "**Magnus Carlsen**, Norway's five-time world chess champion, announced he will not defend his title but denied he is retiring. What, are the Saudis going to bankroll a LIV Chess Tour too?"
- **David Whitley** of the Gainesville (Fla.) Sun, on 769 nudists plunging into the Atlantic Ocean last week: "That broke the previous record of 391 naked people in **Rob Gronkowski's** hot tub after the Bucs won the 2021 Super Bowl."

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