

Cristiano Ronaldo Tops Forbes' List

Why In News

- **Cristiano Ronaldo topped Forbes' list** of highest-paid athletes for the fourth time in his career while Spanish golfer Jon Rahm moved up to second following his sensational switch to Saudi-backed LIV Golf. **Ronaldo became the world's highest-paid** athlete after his move to Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr and Forbes said the 39-year-old's estimated total earnings were in the region of \$260 million, an all-time high for a soccer player.



All You Need To Know

- This figure **includes \$200 million** from his contract with Saudi club Al-Nassr and an additional **\$60 million** from off-field activities.
- The 39-year-old's financial success is unparalleled among his peers, highlighting his enduring marketability and skill.
- **Ronaldo's move to Al-Nassr in January 2023** marked a significant shift, not just for his career but also for Saudi Arabian sports. His presence has helped elevate the profile of the Saudi Pro League, which has seen Al-Nassr finishing second this season.



- **Ronaldo is among four Saudi-based soccer players** in the top 50 highest-paid athletes, indicating the country's increasing influence in global sports.
- Twice major **winner Rahm joined LIV Golf** in December in a big-money move that sent shockwaves through the sport after media reports said the current world number five would be paid at least \$300 million. Apart from that guarantee, Rahm has earned \$218 million and joins Ronaldo as the only two athletes to earn over \$200 million.



- **Third on the list is record eight-times Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi**, who made a lucrative switch to Major League Soccer side Inter Miami, helping the Argentine World Cup winner earn \$135 million. The 36-year-old has earned \$65 million in on-field earnings but \$70 million off it thanks to deals with major sponsors such as Adidas and Apple.



- Los Angeles Lakers forward **LeBron James is fourth at \$128.2 million** and although the 39-year-old, the first NBA player to score 40,000 career points, is nearing the end of his career, the American is set to have one last crack at the Olympics.



Other Players

- Cristiano Ronaldo (soccer) – \$260 million
- Jon Rahm (golf) – \$218 million
- Lionel Messi (soccer) – \$135 million
- LeBron James (basketball) – \$128.2 million
- Giannis Antetokounmpo (basketball) – \$111 million
- Kylian Mbappé (soccer) – \$110 million
- Neymar (soccer) – \$108 million
- Karim Benzema (soccer) – \$106 million
- Steph Curry (basketball) – \$102 million
- Lamar Jackson (football) – \$100.5 million

Female Athletes

- A notable aspect of this year's list is the **absence of female athletes** in the top 50, marking the first time since 2019 that no women have ranked. Historically, only Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova, Li Na, and Naomi Osaka have made it to the top 50 since 2012. This highlights a persistent gender disparity in earnings within the sports industry.



Forbes' Methodology

- Forbes' comprehensive evaluation involves extensive conversations with industry insiders, detailed news reports, and reliable salary databases such as Spotrac. All financial figures are meticulously converted to US dollars based on the current exchange rates to ensure consistency and accuracy.

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