



THE BIG DEBATE: IS THERE TOO MUCH MONEY IN FOOTBALL?



THE DILEMMA

Every summer, football clubs around the world – particularly those in Europe – spend a huge fortune on new players. Transfer deals this summer broke records: just a year after the record was last set, a new ‘most expensive player’ was confirmed. Neymar transferred from Barcelona to Paris St. Germain (PSG) for an incredible £198 million. That’s more than double the previous record, set by Paul Pogba’s move from Juventus to Manchester United in 2016. Then, just a few weeks after Neymar’s transfer, Ousmane Dembélé became the second most expensive footballer in history when he transferred from Borussia Dortmund in Germany to Barcelona for £97 million.

The total spent by Premier League clubs this summer was £1.4 billion – a new record. The previous record of £1.165 billion was only set last summer. On the transfer window’s deadline day, 31 August, a record £210 million was spent. In Italy, the top division clubs completed deals worth £1.03bn; in Germany, top-flight teams spent a total of £720.9m, while Ligue 1 clubs in France made deals worth £931.3m.

Football may be the most popular sport in the world, but has the amount of money in the game gone too far? Is it right that a footballer can earn millions a year, while a nurse in a National Health Service (NHS) hospital can earn less than £20,000? Why do fans have to shell out £890 for a **season ticket** at some clubs, and up to £90 for a replica shirt, while the players have more money than they could ever hope to spend?



Neymar is the world’s most expensive player

GLOSSARY

SEASON TICKET – A ticket that allows its holder access to every home game of the league season. The cheapest in the Premier League is at Huddersfield, where you can buy one for £199. Arsenal has the most expensive season tickets: their cheapest costs £891!



FACTS & FIGURES

The Premier League's highest spending clubs this summer were: Manchester City (**£220.5 MILLION**), Chelsea (**£187.5 MILLION**) and Manchester United (**£146 MILLION**).



Chelsea were paid **£150.8** million by the Premier League after winning the 2016-17 title.

A nurse starting their career could earn as little as **£15,404** a year.



A paramedic starting their career earns between **£21,909** and **£26,302**.

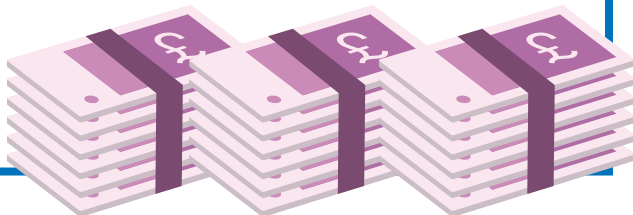


Is it right that footballers earn so much more than doctors and nurses?



The minimum a full-time teacher earns is **£22,467** a year.

The average yearly salary in the Premier League is **£2,438,275**. That's **£46,889** a week, or **£6,680** a day.




PSG is owned by the state of Qatar. The wealthy Middle Eastern country will host the World Cup in **2022**, but has been criticised for its poor human rights.





TOP 5 MOST EXPENSIVE FOOTBALL TRANSFERS EVER

PLAYER	FROM	TO	FEE
Neymar	Barcelona 	PSG 	£198 million
Ousmane Dembélé	Borussia Dortmund 	Barcelona 	£97 million
Paul Pogba	Juventus 	Manchester United 	£89 million
Gareth Bale	Tottenham Hotspur 	Real Madrid 	£86 million
Cristiano Ronaldo	Manchester United 	Real Madrid 	£80 million

WHAT YOU COULD BUY FOR NEYMAR'S FEE

According to Qatar's government-owned news channel, Al-Jazeera, here's what you could get for Neymar's transfer fee of nearly £200 million:

37 properties in London's most expensive borough, Kensington and Chelsea.



Education for 1.15 million primary school pupils in India for one year. Currently more than 8 million Indian kids are not receiving an education.



1 Boeing 787 Dreamliner aeroplane.



Running costs for a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey for 11 years.





HISTORY OF FOOTBALL TRANSFERS

1857 – The first football club in the world, Sheffield FC, is founded. It still exists today.

1863 – The Football Association of England, the first football association in the world, is created.

1885 – For the first time, footballers become professional, which means they are paid money for their work. Clubs were allowed to pay players provided that they had either been born or had lived for two years within a six-mile radius of the ground.

1893 – Willie Groves becomes the first three-figure transfer when he leaves West Bromwich Albion for Aston Villa, for £100.

1905 – Alf Common becomes the first £1,000 player when he moves from Sunderland to bitter rivals Middlesbrough.

1928 – David Jack becomes the first man to be transferred for a five-figure fee when he moves for £10,890 from Bolton Wanderers to Arsenal.



Giuseppe Savoldi

1975 – The world's first million-pound footballer, Giuseppe Savoldi, transfers for £1.2 million from Bologna to Napoli.



Diego Maradona

1982 – World transfer records begin to tumble regularly. The legendary Diego Maradona moves from Boca Juniors in Argentina to Barcelona in Spain for £3 million. Two years later, he breaks his own record by moving to Napoli for £5 million.

1987 – Dutch player Ruud Gullit breaks the transfer record with a £6 million move from PSV Eindhoven to AC Milan in Italy.

1997–98 – Brazilian striker Ronaldo transfers for £19.5 million from Barcelona to Italian team Inter Milan in 1997, then in 1998 winger Denilson switches to Real Betis of Spain from Sao Paulo of Brazil for £21.5 million.



Ronaldo

2009 – Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal becomes the most expensive player in the world when he leaves Manchester United for Real Madrid for £80 million.

2013 – Gareth Bale becomes the first 100 million man – in Euros, not pounds – when he joins Real Madrid for €100.8 million, or £86 million.



Gareth Bale



TV MONEY

It isn't just transfers that make football clubs a lot of money. Teams in Europe's top leagues receive a lot of money from the sale of rights to broadcast matches on TV stations around the world. The 2016-17 season was the first of a new TV deal that saw a total of almost £2.4 billion paid to the 20 Premier League clubs – up from £1.6 billion the season before. Last season, bottom club Sunderland were given £93.5 million, which is more than the £93.2 million 2015-16 champions Leicester were given the previous season. These figures include both the prize money for where the club finishes in the league and the TV money. Clubs also receive millions from sponsors, including the companies whose logos appear on team shirts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Alan Shearer is the last British player to break the world record for the highest transfer fee. His move from Blackburn Rovers to Newcastle in 1996 for £15 million made him the world's most expensive player.



Alan Shearer when he signed for Newcastle

THE MARKET

Top-level footballers earn huge amounts of money in most of the world's top leagues. The very best players, who earn tens of millions of pounds a year, will never be able to spend all the money they get. But it's a little unfair to compare them to people such as nurses, doctors and teachers. A footballer has no control over how much a nurse or doctor earns, and if clubs gave footballers pay-cuts, that wouldn't make a difference to the salaries of nurses or doctors. They aren't being paid money out of the same pot. A nurse's pay is set by the Government; a footballer's pay is set by the club, which is privately owned.

Football is an industry, just like the car industry, or the film industry. The transfer market is like any other market: an environment where buyers and sellers of a specific good or service strike deals. The value of the football transfer market has increased drastically in recent years.

However, as footballers are the reason fans watch the sport, it's only right they receive the lion's share of the money. Most of the top footballers deserve the money they earn, because their employers – the clubs – are rich, and the footballers are the main workers at their clubs. The money is there, and it has to go to someone in football, so it's right that it goes to the players who entertain millions.





WHAT ABOUT THE FANS?

The average salary in the UK is around £27,000. Many loyal football fans who love their club earn a lot less than that. Yet they are expected to shell out hundreds for a season ticket, and extra if they want food or a drink in the football ground. A replica shirt costs upwards of £50. Why should fans pay so much when clubs make millions from TV money, transfers and sponsorship? Would it be fairer if clubs cut players' salaries and transfer fees, and used the savings to reduce the costs of tickets, official merchandise and refreshments for fans?



WHAT ABOUT CLUB STAFF?

While top footballers live glamorous lives, live in mansions, holiday in exclusive resorts and drive expensive cars, other employees of football clubs aren't so lucky. An investigation by the Daily Telegraph newspaper earlier this year found that many workers for Premier League clubs are not even being paid the Living Wage. Match-day stewards, cleaners, caterers and security staff are some of the workers earning less than £8.45 an hour.



Stewards often have a tough job - should they be paid more?



Neymar earns phenomenal amounts of money

BIG SALARIES

Players' salaries in England's top division have increased dramatically in the past 30 years. In 1961, they were £20 per week in 1961. Today, they are around £45,000 per week. In 1985, top players in England earned an average of £25,000 a year. Today it's almost £2 million. One of England's greatest ever players, Stanley Matthews, earned £5 a week in 1932. That works out to about £320 a week in 2017 money. Brazilian superstar Neymar will earn £320 in six minutes! He is on £537,000 a week. The average wage in Brazil is just £130 a week.

LIVING WAGE – This is a calculation done every year by the independent Living Wage campaign. It's an hourly wage based on what employees and their families need to live. The current Living Wage is £8.45 an hour, rising to £9.75 in London, because the capital is more expensive to live in. But the current minimum wage – the minimum workers over 25 in the UK must be paid by law – is £7.50 (£7.05 for under-25s).



YES, THERE'S TOO MUCH MONEY IN FOOTBALL



1. THEY'RE FOOTBALLERS, NOT FIREFIGHTERS – There are many very talented footballers in the world today. But ultimately they are playing a sport, not saving lives, teaching children or leading countries. It is not right that they earn millions while the most important people in society earn so much less.

2. FANS AND CLUB WORKERS DON'T SHARE THE WEALTH – Even within the football industry, transfer fees and players' salaries are much higher than salaries paid to staff at clubs. Groundsmen, catering staff, security workers, secretaries and others earn a lot less than star players. Fans are expected to shell out huge amounts of money, too.

3. THE SUMS OF MONEY ARE RIDICULOUS – Neymar's transfer was only made possible because a wealthy state, Qatar, owns a football club. His huge transfer fee has raised every top player's value. The amount of money spent will keep going up – and that's unacceptable.

NO, THE MONEY IN FOOTBALL IS FINE



1. THEY DESERVE WHAT THEY EARN – Football is the global sport, and its top players are talented athletes who dedicate their lives to being at their best. They entertain millions of fans worldwide and deserve every penny for their hard graft.

2. THEY ARE PAID A FAIR AMOUNT FOR THE MARKET – Football is a market, and it earns huge amounts from TV money and sponsorship. That money is better spent on footballers' salaries than on anybody else within the game, because it's the footballers that attract the fans.

3. MOST FOOTBALLERS GIVE A LOT BACK – As well as entertaining millions of people with their football, most wealthy players participate in community schemes for their clubs. They work with children, sick and disabled people in their communities, and many give large sums of money to charity. They are giving back to society.



Discuss

Should a country be allowed to own a football club?

Discuss

Should there be a limit on how much clubs can spend on transfers?

Discuss

Should there be a limit on how much footballers can earn?

Discuss

Is Neymar's transfer fee of £198 million fair?



Discuss

Does the amount of money in football show that society is not in a good and fair place?

Discuss

Do you support a football club? If so, do you want them to sign the best players, whatever the cost?

Discuss

Footballers entertain millions of people worldwide. Don't they deserve their high wages?

Discuss

If Neymar is worth £198 million, how much would you be worth to a football club?