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New Research Highlights Financial Realities of Professional Women Athletes

Theme:
Voice & Visibility



Co-authored by Parity

New York, NY, December 3, 2024 — [Parity](#), a Group 1001 company and the premier platform for professional women athlete partnerships, today released “Beyond the Game: Exposing the Economic Realities of Professional Women Athletes”, [a new comprehensive study](#) revealing the financial uncertainties facing 500 verified professional women athletes from 55 sports. The survey shines a light on the economic challenges inherent in women’s sports while highlighting practical solutions brands can adopt to close the gap, pointing to exciting opportunities for change and optimism in the future.


Key takeaways from the research, which focused on athlete earnings in 2023, include:


- **58% of athletes made under \$25,000 from their sport annually**, well below the median individual income in the United States in 2023 (\$48,060).
- **41% of athletes paid \$10,000 or more out of pocket** to compete, with **8% spending more than \$50,000** in 2023.
- **50% of respondents did not earn a net income** from their sport after considering income and costs associated with being an athlete.
- Earnings are highly unpredictable, with **40% citing salary inconsistency** and **57% facing unpredictable sponsorship and endorsement opportunities**.
- As a result of this financial uncertainty, **74% of athletes said they hold jobs outside of their sport**, and **1 in 4 works full-time year-round** in addition to training an average of 22+ hours per week.
- Financial stress is widespread, with **64% of athletes feeling very or extremely stressed about money**, and **64% sometimes or frequently considering early retirement** due to financial pressures. A further 5% had retired in 2024 due to financial considerations.
- A relatively small investment can have a big impact: **42% of athletes said a \$5,000 annual sponsorship** would be “very meaningful” or “life-changing,” and **88%** felt the same about a \$20,000 annual sponsorship. Approximately 80% of athletes surveyed said they earned under \$5,000 from sponsorships in 2023.
- On the issue of maternal benefits, only **22% of athletes reported** they would receive such support from their sport if they were to have a child, and only 9% were confident that their sponsors would continue to support them if they became parents.
- Despite the current situation, **45% of athletes remain very or extremely hopeful** that the financial landscape in women's sports will improve in the next five years.


The research surveyed 500 professional women athletes from 55 sports, including rugby, American football, soccer, track and field, and basketball. The athletes represented 30 different countries, with 73% from the United States, and competed in over 28 countries worldwide. The findings pertained to 2023 earnings and costs.

Despite the discouraging statistics, the survey offers a pathway for change. With the growing excitement around women’s sports, brands are presented with a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference. [Prior research by Parity and SurveyMonkey](#) shows that professional women athletes wield significantly more influence than other types of influencers, with women’s sports fans being 2.8 times more likely to purchase a product recommended by a woman athlete rather than by any other type of influencer. By making relatively modest investments, brands can benefit from the exceptional power of women athletes and play a pivotal role in fostering economic sustainability for athletes, closing the gender gap in sports, and inspiring future generations of women athletes.

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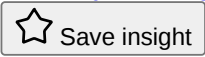
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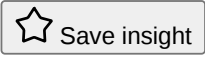


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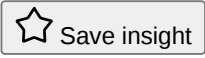
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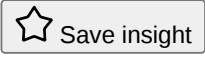


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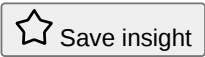
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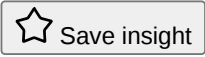
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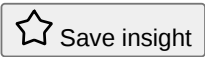
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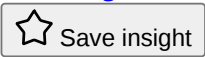
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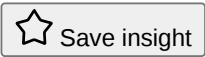
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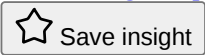
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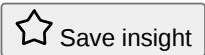
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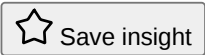
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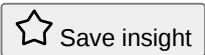
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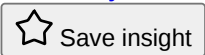
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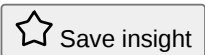
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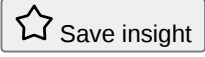
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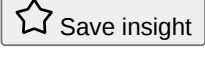


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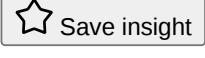
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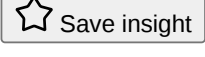
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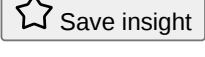
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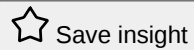
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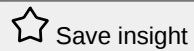
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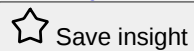
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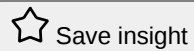
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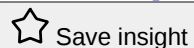
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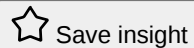
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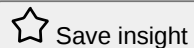
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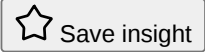
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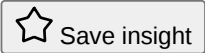
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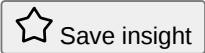
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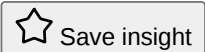
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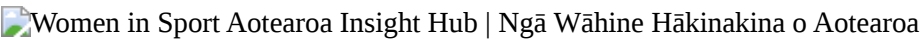
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