



Gender Wage Gap in Professional Sports

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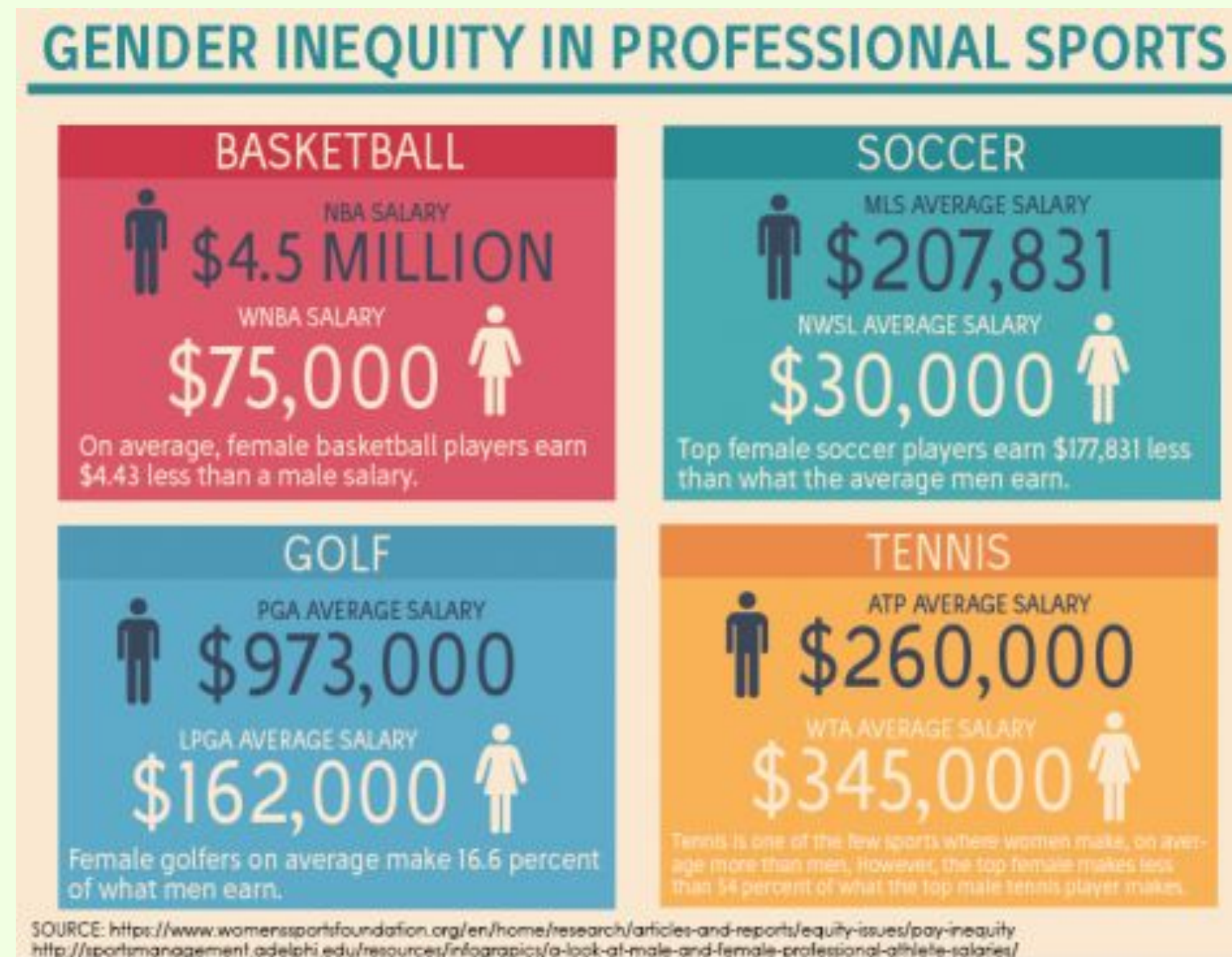




What is a Wage Gap & how can it be seen in sports?

A wage gap, specifically a gender wage gap is the gap in which males and females doing the same job are paid. This wage gap is often seen in STEM or male dominated fields. However more recently the wage gap has had the spotlight when it comes to professional sports. Women athletes have been cut short when it comes to their hard work doing the same thing the men are doing. Some blame this on fans, others don't know what the reason is behind this wage gap.

An example of this throughout sports



WNBA vs NBA

The best example of this gender wage gap comes from the WNBA compared to the NBA. There has been a long debate about why women basketball players don't deserve to get paid as much as the men or why they will never get paid as much. ABC News did a short segment shortly after the WNBA draft, Caitlyn Clarks salary was made public and it created an outburst because of how drastic it truly was. ABC news sports analyst does make note that she will make millions off of endorsements however the wage gap is still very large. ABC noted that the first step towards improving the wage gap is by bringing more attention to the issue. An example of the wage gap in the league is between Sue Bird and Lebron James in 2020. Although Sue Bird has since retired this data is very interesting to look at, both great players with similar successes.



Sue Bird

LeBron James

17 Seasons in the WNBA

4 WNBA Championships

2020 Salary: \$215,000

Bonus for winning 2020 Finals: \$11,356

17 Seasons in the NBA

4 NBA Championships

2020 Salary: \$37.44M

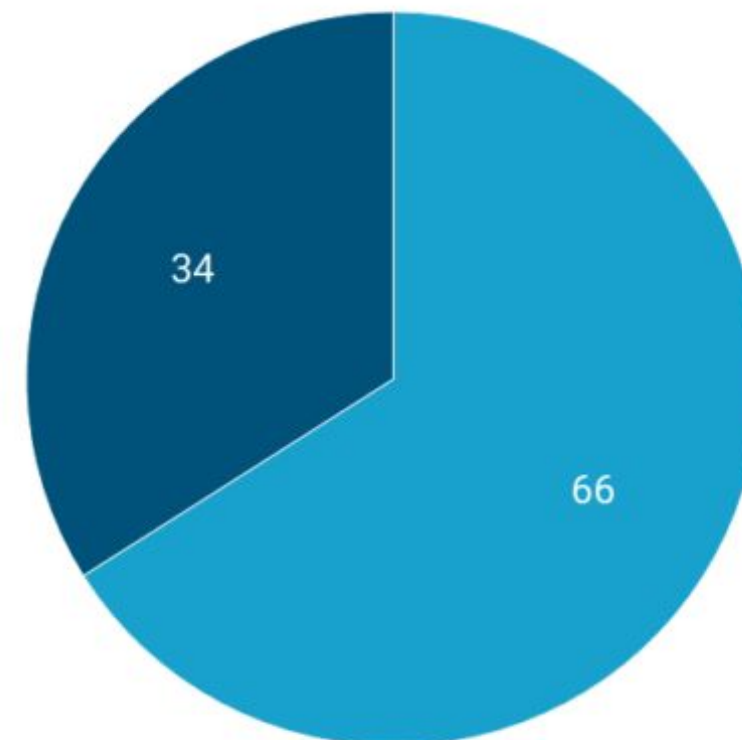
Bonus for winning 2020 Finals: \$370,000

College NIL Deals

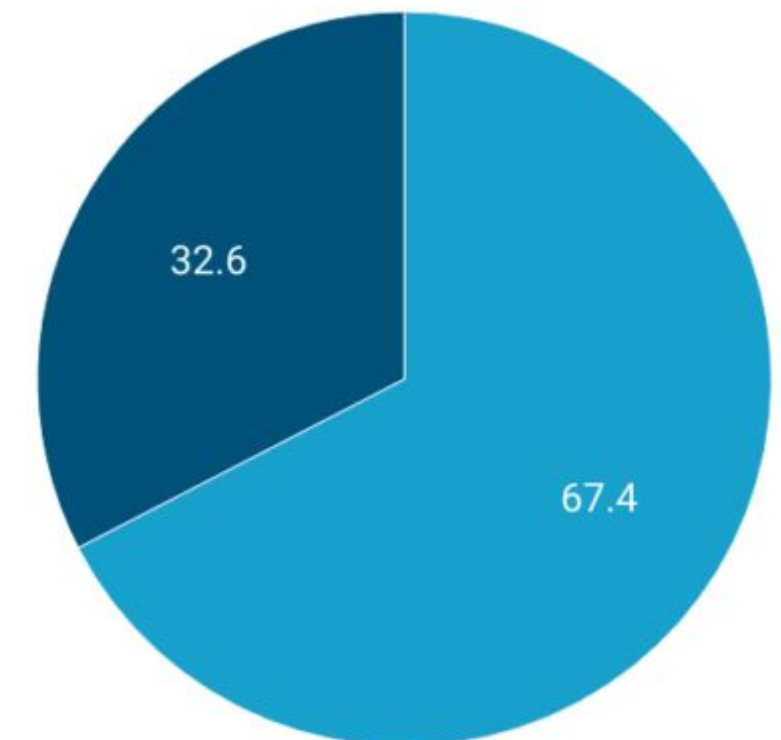
Another example of this wage gap in sports on a smaller scale is in college. Recently college students have been receiving money through NIL deals, the only issue with this is that specific sports are getting more deals than others. CNBC did an article on NIL deals and in 2022 the top sports with compensation from these deals were ranked with football being #1 at 49.6% and womens basketball being 3rd on the list at 12.6%. The article says “12 (football) players have \$1 million-plus deals and 50 players deals worth \$500,000 or more, according to sports data firm on 3– there is a growing number of companies signing NIL deals with female athletes(CNBC News).

Percent of NIL earnings by gender

Male Female



2023



2022

Chart: Lily Brody • Source: Opendorse • Created with Datawrapper

College Coaches



University of Iowa

An article written by local news in Iowa also spoke on the gender wage gap in college. They used the example of head coaches instead of player. The reported Ophelia Jacobson made a great point that it isn't only female players getting paid less but also their coaches.



Salary comparison:

If the women's basketball head coach Lisa Bluder is one of the highest paid as of this last season, getting paid 1.4 million dollars. However it's still less than Fran McCaffery who is the men's head coach making 3.3 million dollars this past season.



How is the Wage Gap being Fixed



Some sports have since made strides to close the gender wage gap, like tennis and soccer. CNN wrote about how the US Open pushed to be more fair when it came to the money for their players. About 50 years ago, CNN said "...the US Open agreed to offer equal prize money to men and women." Since then professional soccer teams have also decided to close the wage gap.





In conclusion



The gender wage gap still has a long way to go, however by supporting your local womens sports team you can help begin to close the gap or at least make it smaller. Women sports are finally getting the recognition they deserve and we are finally taking a few steps towards a solution.



Annotated bibliography

Caitlin Clark's Starting Salary Reveals Major Pay Gap in Women's Sports." *YouTube*, 16 Apr. 2024, youtu.be/8R6SXkdJBIs?si=U_C7TLtPRgbOLnK8.

This video gives a recap of the WNBA draft and then addresses how Caitlyn Clark's salary was made public, it's now been shown to the public how large the wage gap truly is in professional sports. They do acknowledge how she will make millions off of endorsements but this all comes down to capitalism and now that the world has turned into Caitlyn Clark and her game, the hope is she will be the start to fixing the huge gap.

Holtermann, Callie. "What Should Be Done about the Gender Pay Gap in Sports?" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 25 Feb. 2022, www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/learning/what-should-be-done-about-the-gender-pay-gap-in-sports.html.

This story by the New York Times is about how professional soccer teams have pledged to fix the wage gap. The professional women's soccer teams have been fighting for years according to this story, and they have finally got the compensation they deserve.

Wigley, Reed. "Male vs Female Professional Sports Salary Comparison." *Adelphi University Online*, 1 Dec. 2023, online.adelphi.edu/articles/male-female-sports-salary/.

This story gives examples of the wage gap by providing numbers and percentages. While also comparing the top athletes in women and men sports.

"This Professional Sport Has the Smallest Gender Pay Gap. Here's What It Got Right." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 24 Oct. 2023, www.cnn.com/videos/us/2023/08/26/equal-pay-professional-sports-tennis-contd-orig-ht-zt.cnn.

This video focuses on the tennis world and how they fixed their gender wage gap. It all started with Billie Jean King swearing she wouldn't play another tennis match if it wasn't fixed immediately. This video also shares quick moments interviewing real people to find out their opinion on the wage gap as well.

Jacobson, Ophelie. "Fighting for Fairness: The Efforts to Close the Gender Pay Gap in College, Professional Sports." *KCCI*, KCCI, 29 Mar. 2024, www.kcci.com/article/efforts-to-close-gender-pay-gap-in-college-and-professional-sports/60324350.

This article and video compares the inequality in collegiate sports. They also debunk any excuses that people have given in the past about the unequal pay.

Balasaygun, Kaitlin. "In the College Sports Pay Era, Female Athletes Are Emerging as Big Economic Winners." *CNBC*, CNBC, 4 Nov. 2022, www.cnbc.com/2022/10/15/that-nike-bronny-james-nil-deal-was-a-big-deal-for-women-too.html.

This article compares college athletes and their NIL deals, it addresses the big gap between the football players and women athletes at school.