



Professional Athlete

36

Job Description:

Professional athletes compete in athletic events as members of a team or as individuals.

Gross Monthly Income:

\$3,300

Wages:

Average median yearly pay is about \$40,000 a year in Utah.

Schedule: Work, practice, or travel on even-
ing, weekend and holidays. May be part or full
time—often have another job in addition to
being an athlete.



Advancement:

Advancement is usually in the form of sala-
ry increases for superior play. Some ath-
letes go into coaching or sports manage-
ment after retiring from professional play.

For some athletes, the visibility they gain
helps them move into another career, such
as sales or business. They may need addi-
tional training before entering new careers.

Education & Experience:

- ◆ Complete short term on the job
training

High

School Courses:

- ◆ Health Education
- ◆ Food & Nutrition
- ◆ Physical Education

Work Conditions:

- ◆ Have a high level of social contact. Talk with teammates, coaches, and trainers dur-
ing training and competition
- ◆ Occasionally must deal with the physical aggression of other athletes and players
- ◆ Are often exposed to conditions, equipment, and situations that may produce cuts or
bruises.
- ◆ Have a high level of pressure to perform to the highest of their ability. Failure to do
so could result in losing their job.

Travel: Travel a great deal. Often travel each week during the season, sometimes year
round

Job Outlook:



Very Small

Hours a Week:

30

Leisure Time:

Low

Knowledge:

- ◆ Biology
- ◆ English Language

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36



Overview

Today, professional athletes are often just as famous as singers, musicians, actors, and politicians. Most of us have heard of Michael Jordan (basketball), Babe Ruth (baseball), Tony Hawk (professional skateboarding), and Venus Williams (tennis). Then there's Tiger Woods (golf), Shaun White (snowboarding), and Mia Hamm (soccer).

Professional athletes compete in events such as football, basketball, and baseball games, or in tennis and golf tournaments. There are professionals in many other sports as well. Ice hockey, soccer, auto racing, rodeo, track and field, and horse racing are a few.

Professional athletes spend most of their time preparing for competition. They practice the techniques of their sport and exercise to maintain their fitness to play. Some train full time, while others train and compete for just a portion of the year. Many athletes have coaches or trainers who tell them which exercises to do each day. They also follow nutrition advice and see other health professionals for advice and care. In addition, they maintain any equipment used when training and competing.

Many professional athletes make public appearances. They attend fundraising events, parties, and sports clinics. At these events they speak to the public, especially to children. They may demonstrate their sports skills or teach others at these events. They also speak to the media, sometimes as part of a professional contract.

Many athletes work in addition to competing. Some athletes have jobs that are related to their sport. For instance, professional golfers may give lessons, manage golf courses, and sell golf equipment. Other athletes have jobs that are not related to their sport. Extremely successful athletes may appear in commercials in addition to competing.

The outlook for professional athletes varies by sport. Some leagues occasionally add new teams and increase the number of jobs for professional athletes. In addition, the popularity of each sport varies. As the public gains or loses interest in a particular sport, this sometimes affects the number of openings for professional athletes.

It is very difficult to get a job as a professional athlete. Most athletes' careers last only a few years due to injuries and age. Thus, turnover in this occupation is high, creating some job opportunities. However, the number of qualified athletes greatly exceeds the number of job openings.

Pathway:

Marketing