

# State of Women's Soccer 2019

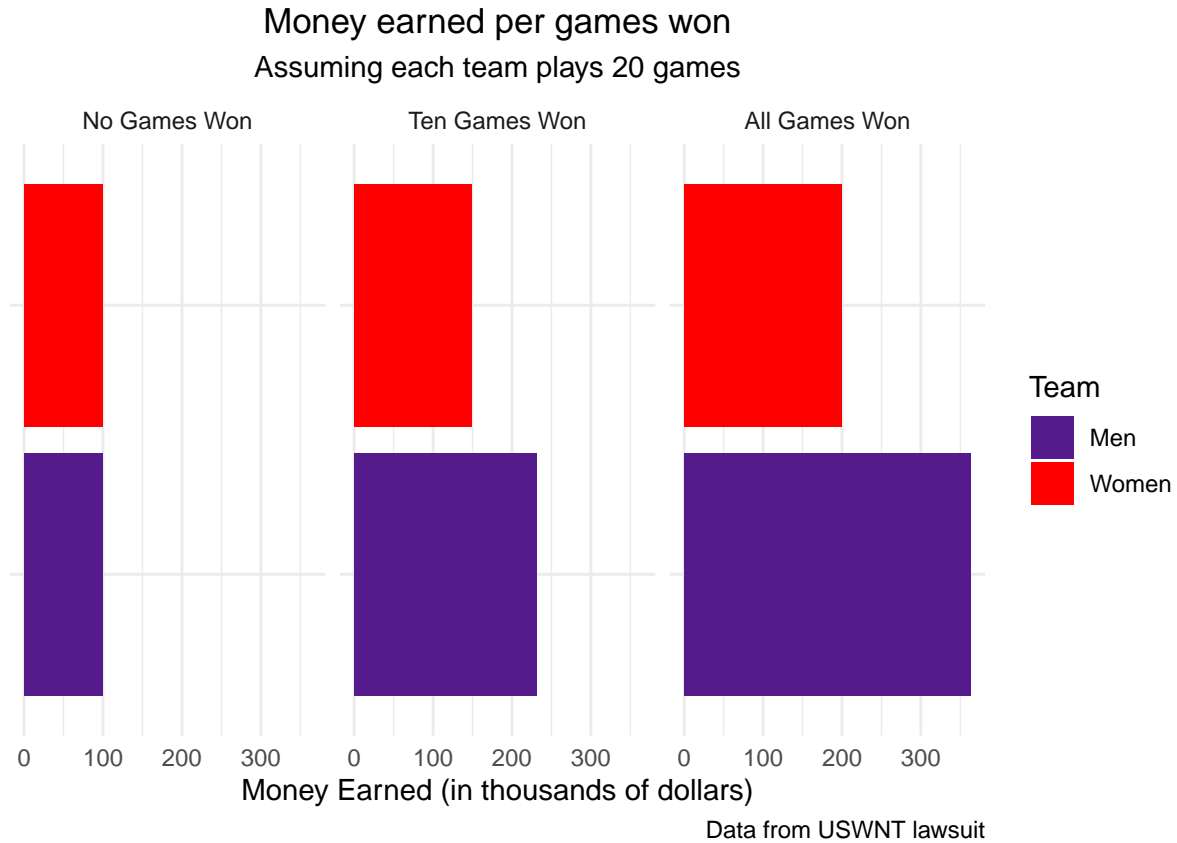
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In March 2019, the 28 members of the United States Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) filed a class-action lawsuit against their employer, U.S. Soccer. The lawsuit accuses U.S. soccer of violating the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by consistently paying USWNT athletes less than their male counterparts (players on the U.S. Men's National Team or USMNT). The lawsuit, and the subsequent dominance of the USWNT in the 2019 Women's World Cup, have drawn significant attention to the issue of equal pay in professional soccer. However, the USWNT and USMNT have different pay structures that makes it difficult to compare their earnings. This project seeks to explain the USWNT and USMNT compensation structures and earning potentials in a way that allows for useful comparisons. It will also go beyond the USWNT to examine how professional female soccer players are compensated throughout the world.

## Regular Season Pay

The USWNT and USMNT have different payment structures, which makes it different to compare their salaries. USWNT players make a base salary of \$100,000 and earn bonuses of on average \$4,950 for games they win. The actual amount they earn may depend on the FIFA rating of their opponent. The USMNT does not have a base salary, but players make a bonus of \$5,000 for losing a game and up to \$17,625 for a win, depending on the opponent's ranking. On average, USMNT players would make around \$13,166 per game that they win. The USMNT and USWNT also play differing number of games per year, further complicating efforts to directly compare their salaries. The graph below shows how much the USMNT and USWNT would make if each team played 20 games, depending on the number of games won.



## World Cup Pay

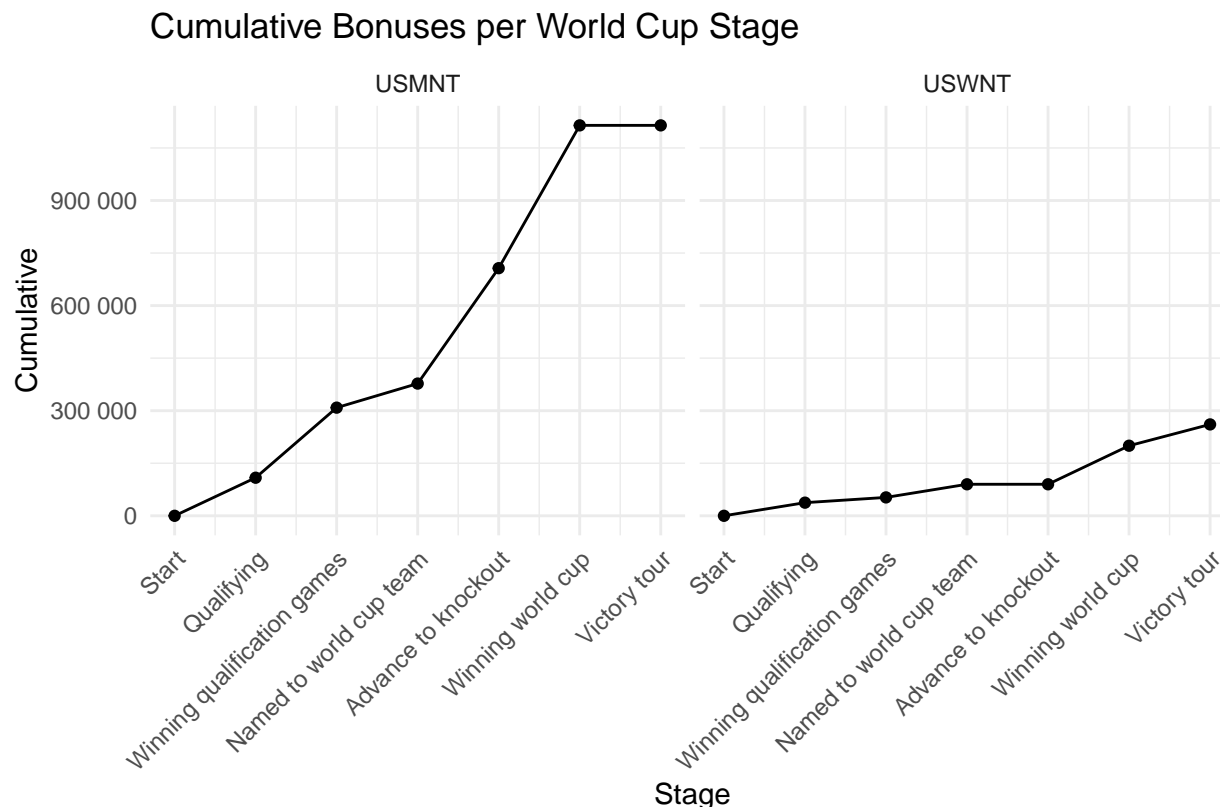
USMNT and USWNT players also make different amounts in bonuses for each stage of the world cup they reach, from being named to the world cup team to winning the world cup. The table below shows how much a USWNT and USMNT player makes on average at each of these stages.

World Cup Bonuses per Stage			
Stage	USWNT	USMNT	Difference
Start	\$0	\$0	\$0
Qualifying	\$37,500	\$108,695	\$71,195
Winning qualification games	\$15,000	\$200,000	\$185,000
Named to world cup team	\$37,500	\$68,750	\$31,250
Advance to knockout	\$0	\$329,376	\$329,376
Winning world cup	\$110,000	\$407,608	\$297,608
Victory tour	\$60,869	\$0	\$-60,869
Total	\$260,869	\$1,114,429	\$853,560

Data from The Guardian.

## Cumulative Difference

The different bonuses made at each stage add up to quite a difference. This chart shows the cumulative amount that a USWNT or USMNT player would walk away with if their team exited the tournament at each respective stage.



Data from The Guardian

In response to the USWNT lawsuit, U.S. Soccer has claimed that it is justified in paying female athletes less because of the market reality that women's soccer generates less revenue. This graph shows USWNT and USMNT revenue, expenses, and net income for fiscal year 2014 through the projected values for 2019. While the USWNT had generated less income for U.S. soccer in some years, the reverse is true in others. Comparing Salaries in the NWSL and MLS The American professional soccer leagues are Major League Soccer (MLS) and the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). Many USMNT hopefuls play in the MLS, while it USWNT players are practically required to play in the NWSL. This graph shows the range of possible salaries in the NWSL and MLS for 2013-2018. The discrepancy in national league salaries contributes to the discrepancy in the amount of money that USWNT and USMNT athletes can expect to make, as USMNT make higher national league salaries in addition to their higher earnings for games played on the USMNT. The question of equal (or unequal) investment in women's and men's soccer goes beyond the USWNT lawsuit. This section explores investment in men's and women's soccer at the professional level throughout the world. How much are female World Cup athletes paid around the world? This data was taken from a New York Times article by Allison McCann, who conducted a survey of 108 female world cup athletes. Numerous countries are not represented; however, the map below gives a sense of the differences in salaries between female World Cup players. This map shows average values, but the minimum reported by players in McCann's survey was \$0 (Jamaica) and the maximum was \$350,000 (USA). Is gender equality correlated with performance? If paying male and female soccer players equally increases the performance of women's teams, that fact should incentivize national soccer governing bodies to do so. However, the real picture is more complicated, with gender equality (which I am using as a proxy for equal pay) only loosely correlated

with better performance. GDP is much more strongly correlated with performance, suggesting it is not equality of investment between male and female teams that increases performance, but level of investment (as richer countries are able to invest more in their soccer teams).