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| **The top-earning non-American athletes** *Posted on Thursday, July 02 2009* |
| It's boom time for foreign-born athletes. Despite the slow economy, the average earnings of the top 20 non-American sportsmen are at an all-time high $29.5 million. Of those 20, only four play in U.S.-based leagues, led by perennial powerhouse David Beckham, who is back in Major League Soccer with the Los Angeles Galaxy at least through the end of this season.    Internationally, soccer and Formula 1 racing are catching up with the high-paying NBA and Major League Baseball in terms of payout. Six Europe-based footballers in addition to Becks make this year's list, while four F1 drivers also take the checkered flag here with earnings in excess of $20 million each.    In all, this year's list features seven soccer players, five motor-sports racers, two NBA stars, two golfers, two tennis players, one baseball player and one boxer. As always, our list includes salary, bonuses, endorsement income and appearance fees. For the Fortunate 50 list of the top-earning American athletes, click here.    1  David Beckham  Los Angeles Galaxy (MLS)  Great Britain  Last Year's Rank: 1  $45,200,000    2  Kimi Räikkönen  Auto Racing  Finland  Last Year's Rank: 2  $40,100,000    3  Manny Pacquiao  Boxing  Philippines  Last Year's Rank: NR  $40,000,000    4  Lionel Messi  FC Barcelona (Soccer)  Argentina  Last Year's Rank: 4  $39,900,000    5  (Tie)  Fernando Alonso  Auto Racing  Spain  Last Year's Rank: 6  $35,000,000    5  (Tie)  Valentino Rossi  Motor Sports  Italy  Last Year's Rank: 7  $35,000,000    7  Yao Ming  Houston Rockets (NBA)  China  Last Year's Rank: 8  $33,070,550    8  Lewis Hamilton  Auto Racing  Great Britain  Last Year's Rank: 11  $32,800,000    9  Roger Federer  Tennis  Switzerland  Last Year's Rank: 5  $29,561,341    10  Vijay Singh  Pro Golf  Fiji  Last Year's Rank: NR  $28,681,028    11  Ronaldinho  AC Milan (soccer)  Brazil  Last Year's Rank: 3  $27,400,000    12  Cristiano Ronaldo  Real Madrid (soccer)  Portugal  Last Year's Rank: 9  $25,500,000    13  Sergio Garc�a  Pro Golf  Spain  Last Year's Rank: NR  $24,976,830    14  Thierry Henry  FC Barcelona (Soccer)  France  Last Year's Rank: 9  $23,700,000    15  Ichiro Suzuki  Seattle Mariners (MLB)  Japan  Last Year's Rank: 10  $22,500,000    16  Dirk Nowitzki  Dallas Mavericks (NBA)  Germany  Last Year's Rank: 18  $22,077,904    17  Maria Sharapova  Tennis  Russia  Last Year's Rank: 13  $21,937,879    18  (Tie)  Jenson Button  Auto Racing  Great Britain  Last Year's Rank: NR  $21,100,000    18  (Tie)  Kaká  Real Madrid (soccer)  Brazil  Last Year's Rank: 19  $21,100,000    20  Zlatan Ibrahimovic  Inter Milan (soccer)  Sweden  Last Year's Rank: NR  $19,500,000 (source SI.com |