

Can Cristiano Ronaldo earn it like Beckham?

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| sponsor | endorsement | transfer fee | predecessor | rival |
| physique | eloquence | insular | likeable | lampoon |

- If you _____ someone, you publicly criticize them by making jokes about them.
- An _____ country is one that is not interested in learning new ideas or ways of doing things, especially from outside that country.
- A _____ is a business that pays money to support a sports team.
- If someone is _____, they are pleasant and friendly and easy to like.
- _____ is the ability to express what you mean using clear and effective language.
- A _____ is a person, team or business that competes with another.
- A _____ is the amount of money that one professional football team pays to another for one of their players.
- An _____ is when a famous person says in an advertisement that they like a particular product.
- A person's _____ is the shape of their body.
- A _____ is the person who had a job or a particular position before someone else.

2 Find the information

Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible.

- Where is the footballer Cristiano Ronaldo from?
- Who was the 2008 World Player of the Year?
- How much did David Beckham earn last year from product endorsements?
- How much did US golfer Tiger Woods earn from endorsements last year?
- How much was Ronaldo paid at Manchester United for playing football?
- How much of Real Madrid's income comes from overseas markets?

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From £175 to £80m in 14 years - now the new king of soccer can establish the Ronaldo 'brand'

Robert Booth, 11 June, 2009

- 1 Ever since Cristiano Ronaldo was a child practising his tricks at the tiny Andorinha football club on his home island of Madeira, his talent has always been measured in money. The club turned down an offer of £175 for their promising 10-year-old in the belief his skills and speed were worth far more. And how right they were. Real Madrid have been granted permission to open negotiations with Manchester United, talks that are likely to end with the 24-year-old Portuguese player moving to Madrid for a transfer fee of £80m and a salary that could add £60m to the bill.
- 2 For the marketing executives at Madrid and those surrounding Ronaldo and his agent, the world-record deal is far more than a sporting concern; sports marketing executives believe that the transfer could make the 2008 World Player of the Year a serious rival to David Beckham. Ronaldo is destined to become the world's most valuable football brand, a status that will also put him in the top league of sports earners.
- 3 At Manchester United Ronaldo earned £7m a year in salary and £12m from product endorsements, not far behind Beckham's earnings last year of £3.4m from football and £26m off the pitch. Ronaldo has already starred in adverts for Coca Cola and the video game *FIFA Street 2* amongst others. His sponsorship deal with Nike is understood to be worth £9m. Now, as part of a revitalized Real Madrid team which is likely to allow him an even higher profile, those earnings are set to rise.
- 4 Florentino Perez, the re-elected Real Madrid president, was already thinking along those lines prior to yesterday's announcement. "When Beckham came we went from earning €7m a year to €45m a year through our deals with our sponsors," Perez said. "If Cristiano Ronaldo comes, even though he is currently with Nike, he then puts on an Adidas shirt every week. There are certain players who are very profitable because they have a spectacular commercial effect that can earn the club money."
- 5 Ronaldo does not possess, however, the same "likeability" as Beckham, which may affect his global brand. Fans have lampooned and cursed him over the years. Three years ago, the Daily Mail raged, "Get lost Ronaldo!" when he was accused of encouraging the referee to send off Wayne Rooney in an England v Portugal match at the 2006 World Cup. An agent for a leading England player yesterday said, "There's a question about his likeability factor."
- 6 How much Ronaldo earns for himself and his club depends on how well his image is sold into emerging markets and how well he develops his own public personality, according to Simon Chadwick, a professor of sport business strategy. "European football is a saturated market and the crucial areas for Real Madrid to work on are overseas markets like China, Japan, Brazil and Argentina," he said. "Real Madrid currently generates less than 5% of its income from those sources."
- 7 According to research conducted by Chadwick into what makes a strong sports player brand, Ronaldo already has some of the key personal attributes to become like Beckham, his predecessor in Manchester United's number seven shirt. "He's good looking, glamorous and has a good physique – and the people we surveyed said that was important," he said. "You have to play with clubs that are associated with success and our research shows it has to be sustained success. That is one of the reasons that Tiger Woods emerged so strongly as a brand. People also said they liked Woods's intelligence and eloquence. Beckham struggled with that which is one of the reasons why he has not come close to Woods' earnings."
- 8 "This is a challenge for Ronaldo too. Off-field lifestyle is important: who you are married to and where you live. This is where Beckham has done well and Ronaldo has work to do. Man or woman, he needs to find a steady partner and ideally someone who is famous in their own right. Finally you have to be seen as good team player. In his later career, Beckham has had a fantastic reputation as a team player and I think Ronaldo has a problem in this area because he is seen too much as an individual."
- 9 "Ronaldo is more likely to appeal to Hispanic markets because he is Portuguese, and that might

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help him break into the US, although it remains a very insular place when it comes to accepting football," said Jon Holmes, a football agent. Whatever happens to Ronaldo's bank balance during his time at Madrid he will struggle to match Tiger Woods, who heads the sporting rich list

earning £64m in endorsements alone last year.

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. What is one of the reasons that Beckham has not come close to earning as much money as Tiger Woods?
 - a. Beckham has struggled to be a professional sportsman.
 - b. He is no longer the world's most valuable football brand.
 - c. He is not as eloquent or intelligent as Woods.
2. What does Ronaldo have to do to emerge strongly as a brand?
 - a. Get married.
 - b. Find a famous partner and be seen as a good team player.
 - c. Continue to be seen as an individual.
3. What effect did the signing of David Beckham have on Real Madrid?
 - a. They became immediately successful on the pitch.
 - b. Their sponsorship earnings increased more than 600%.
 - c. They became instantly more likeable.
4. Which market is Ronaldo likely to appeal to?
 - a. The American market.
 - b. The Far Eastern market.
 - c. The Hispanic market.

4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. A two-word phrasal verb meaning *to refuse* (para 1)
2. An adjective meaning *strong and successful again* (para 3)
3. A two-word expression meaning *before something happened* (para 4)
4. A verb meaning *to say or think offensive or impolite words about someone* (para 5)
5. A two-word phrasal verb meaning *to tell a player officially to leave the field because they have done something that is not allowed by the rules* (para 5)
6. An adjective meaning *completely full* (para 6)
7. A plural noun meaning *features or qualities of someone or something* (para 7)
8. An adjective meaning *continuing at the same level or rate for a long time* (para 7)

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5 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns in the right-hand column to form phrases from the text.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. turn down | a. negotiations |
| 2. grant | b. a survey |
| 3. open | c. an image |
| 4. break into | d. permission |
| 5. conduct | e. a market |
| 6. sell | f. an offer |

6 Word building

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

- Certain players are very _____ because of their image. [profit]
- They earn a lot of money in _____. [endorse]
- Real Madrid have been granted permission to open _____ with Manchester United for the purchase of Ronaldo. [negotiate]
- Ronaldo has a £9 million _____ deal with Nike. [sponsor]
- Ronaldo's _____ will almost certainly rise. [earn]
- Ronaldo was a _____ footballer as a child. [promise]

7 Discussion

Do you think it is right that professional footballers can earn in a week what it takes a nurse or a building workers seven or eight years to earn?

What are the arguments for and against limiting the salaries of top sportsmen and women?